THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN DEVELOPING CULTURE AT A NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

By

Heidi Nielsen

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1994

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NAME   Heidi Nielsen

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EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Chair   Maureen Hoskyn

Eugenie Samier, Associate Professor
Senior Supervisor

Heesoon Bai, Assistant Professor
Member

Linda LaRocque, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education,
SFU
Examiner

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The Role of the Principal in Developing Culture at a New Secondary School: A Comparative Case Study

Author:

_____
(Signature)

Ms. Heidi Nielsen
_____
(Name)

Sept. 16, 2003
_____
(Date)

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the principal's role in developing culture in a new secondary school. This is an under-developed area of research, as most studies which discuss school culture examine the principal's role in shaping it, not initiating it.

The study relied primarily on Schein's functionalist approach, examining culture through three categories: artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. The principals of two new secondary schools were thoroughly interviewed regarding the ways in which they went about influencing and shaping the cultures of their respective schools. As well, three teachers from each school were interviewed: two founding teachers and a new teacher. These participants were questioned about the culture of their school and what they saw as the principal's role in developing and maintaining it.

Each participant was interviewed twice over the four-month period during which data were collected. Semi-structured interview questions elicited information about school artifacts, such as logos, mottos and slogans, building layout, and resource allocation. As well, questions about professional development, and the spoken values of staff, students, parents, and administrators uncovered espoused values. Then underlying assumptions at each school were discussed, drawn from the data gathered on artifacts and espoused values.

The results of this study confirm much of the school culture research, as they clearly demonstrate that principals do play a role in shaping the culture of

their schools. Furthermore, there are several steps principals can take when initiating culture, for example, creating a shared vision. Another finding, the role and effect of leadership style on the ways in which the two principals went about developing culture, confirmed leadership literature conclusions and provided an area of critique for effective schools authors.

The principal's role in developing school culture is an important area of research, as recent educational reform has focused on creating effective school cultures as a way of improving student performance. Therefore it is essential that principals are not only aware of how their actions influence the culture of their school, but also the measures they can take to shape an already existing culture or develop a new culture.

Dedication

To my husband, for all his patience, love and support
throughout this two year journey.

To my dear friend Elisabeth, whose encouragement
and optimism were a constant inspiration.

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I would like to acknowledge all the people who helped to make this research possible. Firstly, many thanks to my senior supervisor, Eugenie Samier, without whose guidance, constant support and belief in my abilities, this project never would have begun. Secondly, to my Master's cohort, thank-you for all your positive encouragement over the past two years. Thirdly, to the two principals and six teachers who cheerfully gave their time and expertise to this project, your dedication is much appreciated. Finally, to my family members, who have listened and provided support during both the high points and the low, I couldn't have done it without you.

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Chapter One

Introduction

"When you walk through the front doors, you can just feel 'something', a warmth, a feeling of belonging." Statements such as these are often heard when entering certain establishments seemingly possessing an unidentifiable and unnamable quality that makes people feel welcome and comfortable. However, some establishments create the opposite effect: upon entrance, people immediately feel a coldness, or feel that the environment they have entered is hostile or sterile. What is it that creates these feelings? Many would say it is the atmosphere or the ambiance of the place. Others would describe it as the climate or ethos, but really that "something" they are trying to describe is part of the culture of the organization. And schools, just like other kinds of organizations, have varying cultures.

"Culture" is a difficult word to define as it invokes a myriad of definitions. Each author who writes about culture appears to use a slightly different definition varying from "the source of values that people share in a society" (Hallinger & Leithwood 132) to "the way we do things around here" (Bower 80). According to

Sergiovanni, "culture is generally thought of as the normative glue that holds a particular school together. With shared visions, values, and beliefs at its heart, culture serves as a compass setting, steering people in a common direction. It provides norms that govern the way people interact with each other. It provides a framework for deciding what does, or does not make sense" (*Lifeworld of Leadership* 1). One thing most of the definitions have in common is that culture deals with relationships between people and the values they share (Schein, *2nd Ed.*; Lane; Lambert; Marshall; Johnson). No matter how one chooses to define culture, there are certain aspects one should take into account in the study of it. The atmosphere, as mentioned above, is only a small part of the culture of an organization; however, it is often a primary indication of that organization's culture.

According to Schein, culture is "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (*2nd Ed.* 12). Schein breaks culture down into three levels: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions (*2nd Ed.* 17). Artifacts take into account visible organizational structures and processes such as logos, slogans, and building layout. Espoused values are the spoken values held by the organization such as strategies, goals and philosophies. In a school setting, these would include school mission and vision statements as well as school growth plans. Basic underlying assumptions are the unconscious, taken-for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings of staff members. They

are those things that every member of staff knows, but no one actually speaks. The study of these three levels of culture provides a good starting place for the analysis of the culture of a particular organization, such as a school. Therefore, Schein's functionalist approach has been utilized for much of this study.

Throughout the literature on organizational culture and school culture, it is recognized that leaders play an important role in initiating and shaping the cultures of their organizations. However, although much research examines how a leader can shape and change a culture, the leader's role in initiating culture is surprisingly under-investigated. It is this initiating role that will be the subject of this thesis.

THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA

The idea for this study came from experiences over the past ten years at various schools in a large urban school district. Each school in the district has a very different school culture, some exhibiting characteristics of what Deal and Peterson refer to as "toxic" school cultures, while others display qualities of what DuFour and Eaker refer to as effective school cultures. The former are characterized by clear divisions in the staff or between some staff and administration. Some have students who seem very unwilling to participate in school activities and who view school as a chore. Others are very cold collegially, affecting staff behaviour and interactions. Some schools have numerous cliques and very few staff eat in the staff room. At others, staff seem to compete for resources and kudos instead of working together. All of these are

characteristics of toxic school cultures. In contrast, the latter effective school cultures embody very different characteristics. First, there appears to be no real staff divisions with staff really working together, and a great deal of concern expressed over the home and work lives of staff members. At some schools, young staff work alongside the older staff to gain valuable knowledge from more experienced teachers, laying the foundation for mentorship. In these schools, students more willingly participate in numerous school activities, and are often still at school well into the evening. The differences in culture among the various schools at which I have taught puzzled me, and I began to consider how they had arisen.

Culture is an ever-changing phenomenon, influenced by numerous factors. The cultures that had developed at these schools were probably influenced by the way the schools started and by the values, beliefs and actions of the administrators. When the opportunity arose to go to a newly established school, and be a part of developing its culture, I jumped at the chance. Studying culture as part of my Master's degree has renewed my interest in looking at culture development in schools and has led to this particular study. My main hope is to gain insight into how administrative decisions can have positive and negative effects on the culture of the school (the staff in particular). I am also hoping this study will help me gain wisdom, so that when I am in an administrative role, I will have some research experience to guide my decisions.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

To accommodate the growing population in many areas of the lower mainland over the past several years, it has been necessary to re-distribute school boundaries and open many new elementary and secondary schools. Many of these new schools draw students from already existing, and sometimes even rival, schools. As a consequence, those students and staff members who are joining together to form these new secondary schools may experience tension both during and after the amalgamation process. In order to develop a healthy school culture, these tensions must be overcome as these students, as well as staff members from all over the district, come together.

One of the key figures who aids in the development of this culture is the school principal. In fact, creating a positive school culture is one of the greatest tasks facing school administrators today. It is especially important when opening a new school because the culture established will have a tremendous effect on the achievement of students, the happiness of staff, and the overall efficiency of the school (Reavis, Vinson, & Fox; Lane; Sagor; Peterson). Before the school even opens, the principal makes many fundamental decisions regarding such basic requirements as the buying of equipment, the hiring of staff, the allocation of resources, and perhaps even the design of the building itself. Numerous other decisions are made once the first school year is underway. According to Sergiovanni, "most successful school leaders will tell you that getting the culture right and paying attention to how parents, teachers, and students define and experience meaning are two widely accepted rules for creating effective schools"

(*Lifeworld of Leadership* 1). Thus, the principal has a large impact on shaping a school's culture.

Through my research, I have found several studies which examine the role of the principal in changing an already existing culture (Johnson; Lambert; Peterson; Lane; Karpicke & Murphy; Stolp, *Leadership for School Culture*; Schweiker-Marra; Reavis, Vinson, & Fox), but very little has been done regarding the principal's role in developing culture at a new school. As increasingly more new schools open, principals will have to meet this challenge, and information to guide them is needed. In an effort to facilitate future principals in developing culture in a new school, I have undertaken this study to document the role of two principals of relatively new schools (each school is four years old) and their effect on their respective cultures.

RESEARCH APPROACH

I have chosen to do a qualitative comparative case study, as this approach will give me the clearest insight into the development of culture. According to Maxwell, "qualitative researchers typically study a relatively small number of individuals or situations and preserve the individuality of each of these in their analyses, rather than collecting data from large samples and aggregating the data across individuals or situations. Thus, they are able to understand how events, actions, and meanings are shaped by the unique circumstances in which these occur" (18-19). And Miles and Huberman state that "much recent research supports a claim that ... field research is far better than solely quantified

approaches at developing explanations of what we call local causality – the

actual events and processes that led to specific outcomes" (*A Sourcebook of*

New Methods 132). This is the goal of my study: to look at how the decisions

made by each principal in the first year of operation and in subsequent years

affected the developing culture of each school.

THE QUESTION

Through interviewing each principal, and some members of staff, I hope to

answer my primary research question: "What is the principal's role in developing

the culture of a new secondary school?" Therefore, I will focus on what things

each principal did similarly, and whether the outcomes were similar, as well as

looking at what things they did differently, the outcomes, and why these particular

outcomes occurred. In addition to discovering the positive effects, I also hope to

discover what types of decisions and actions did not work for each principal and

their thoughts as to why these ideas didn't work. Through my discussions with

staff and the two principals, their styles of leadership will emerge, revealing the

relationship that researchers have found between leadership style and

organizational culture (Boleman & Deal; *Schein, 2nd Ed.*). The leadership

metaphor by which principals operate determines their style (Morgan) and as will

become apparent in my study, each principal operates by a very different

metaphor.

REASONS FOR THE STUDY

This study is important in terms of the field of educational culture research because, as mentioned above, it examines a previously underdeveloped area. As well, recent calls for educational reform and the overall dissatisfaction expressed by parents and teachers alike with current educational systems have shifted the focus to the culture of schools. This has lead to an outpouring of research on effective schools (DuFour & Eaker; Sergiovanni, *The Lifeworld of Leadership*; Deal & Peterson, *Shaping School Culture*; Stolp, *Transforming School Culture*). However, much of the effective schools research only deals with ways in which a principal can come into an already existing school and work to change the culture. Very little, if any, deals with the actual creation of culture. And as Corbet, Firestone, and Rossman suggest, it is very difficult to change certain aspects of an organization's culture, especially what they refer to as the "sacred norms" of staff members (37). Thus, creating a positive culture to begin with is extremely important, so research is needed to suggest how a principal can go about doing this. Of course, many of the same principles for changing the culture of a school may apply to creating culture, for example, having a strong vision, creating a communication network, and creating and maintaining cultural artifacts.

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, over the past ten years I have taught at numerous schools within the same district and have experienced a myriad of cultures. The schools that I felt had strong, positive cultures exhibited some similar characteristics. Probably the most noticeable was a collegial staff,

who worked well together to overcome problems arising both externally and internally. A second characteristic was a clear identity as a school: a knowledge of who they were as an organization as well as the role each one played in contributing to that identity. At these schools there were visible symbols of the school identity, such as murals of school logos painted on the walls, students and staff wearing school clothing, or mugs, pens and thank-you cards bearing school logos given as rewards for work well done. Thirdly, there were rituals, such as first-day school activities, the form announcements took, Remembrance Day assemblies, awards nights, commencements, and "bon voyage" celebrations for staff members who were leaving to go to another school or to retire. I was very fortunate to teach in a school that possessed these aspects of a strong and effective culture early in my teaching career, and quite honestly, thought every school contained such a culture. It was not until transferring to other schools, where many of these things were not present, or were but they didn't seem to have the same positive effect, that I realized these aspects of culture do not develop on their own and that they are definitely not common to every school. This piqued my curiosity as to why schools develop such different cultures.

One of the differences between each of the schools at which I taught was the leadership style of the principal. There were principals who were "great man" leaders, and principals who focused on the management aspects of the job. And the style of each of these principals had a profound effect on the culture of the school, sometimes positive, and sometimes negative. The principal's leadership style could lead to the staff whole-heartedly supporting him/her, and thus being more willing to adapt to any changes he/she may suggest, or to the staff bonding

together against the principal, and refusing to consider any changes, even if they might be in the best interests of the school. Staff like the first tended to have low levels of teacher turnover, thus providing greater opportunity for the creation of a more cohesive culture, while staff like the latter had very high teacher turnover, making it more difficult to develop a consistent culture.

Even though I was aware of the differing cultures at the schools at which I taught and of the different leadership styles, it was not until I moved to my current school that I began to make the connections between leadership style and culture. In becoming part of a newly evolving culture, I was given the opportunity to observe how and why different aspects of culture developed. I also became aware of the principal's role in creating and maintaining different aspects of the school's culture.

Another way in which my interest was piqued regarding the development of culture arose from conversations with a close colleague who teaches at a school identical in structure and that opened at the same time as mine. Over the past four years we have compared numerous aspects of our two schools and noticed a multitude of differences in their cultures. Some of these variations can be attributed to the differing populations of the two schools, but many of them cannot. In studying different kinds of leadership, I have become particularly interested in culture and how it is initiated. Being at this new school since it opened has given me the opportunity to observe and be part of the development of its culture. I am curious to discover why its culture has developed in certain ways and ponder what could have been done differently.

For a practical purpose, I think as the school district grows, and more new schools open, the development of culture in these schools, and the principal's role, will become increasingly more relevant. As I hope to one day become a principal, I want to discover what types of things a principal can do to develop a good culture in a school (of course a good culture is subjective, as what is good will differ from person to person). For research purposes, I had easy access to both schools included in my study, as I live within this district. As well, I think culture in schools is an area in which not enough research has been done – just look at how many schools, especially inner city schools, have really negative cultures. As well, in British Columbia, schools are becoming much more multicultural in their student and teacher populations. This has led to rapid changes in the cultures of schools and principals need to be aware of the role they play in shaping these ever-evolving cultures. Another area of concern is the trend towards commercialization of education that the current Liberal government appears to be encouraging. This trend discounts the importance of school culture as it aims to make schools efficiently running machines that are carbon copies of each other. Creating an effective school culture in this hostile political environment produces an even larger challenge for principals.

Chapter Two

Relevant Literature

This project draws on five relevant bodies of literature: organizational theory, organizational culture, school culture, leadership, and educational leadership. A review of the trends in organizational theory provides the groundwork for studying organizational culture. Organizational theory examines the ways in which organizations, such as schools, function, grow, change, and adapt, or fail to do so, within their respective environments. The body of literature on organizational theory does not provide simply one theory, but instead a plethora of theories as to how organizations can be studied.

Examining the culture of an organization, how that culture has formed, how it responds and adapts to its environment, and how it adapts to internal changes within the organization is one area of organizational theory that has come to the forefront over the past two decades. Edgar Schein is one of the foremost authors in the field of organizational culture, and it is his functionalist approach to the study of culture on which this study has primarily been modeled. Subsequent authors, like Smircich, who takes a symbolic approach, and Schulz,

who employs and builds on the work of Schein and many others, will also be examined.

Once the general literature on organizational culture has been reviewed, the focus will narrow to examine the literature that deals specifically with school culture. The global concern with school reform has lead to a recent focus on school culture as a gateway to improving school effectiveness. Here prominent authors like Deal and Peterson, Sergiovanni, and DuFour and Eaker all argue the importance of considering school culture when searching for ways to improve student achievement. Each offers suggestions as to how to build and improve a school's culture. Each also recognizes the prominent role of school leadership, especially the role of the principal, in this process. Therefore, it is necessary to review the literature on leadership, especially transformational leadership, as this is often the role a leader must take when attempting to influence the culture of an organization. Finally, as this study focuses on the role of the principal in developing a new culture, the research on educational administration will be examined.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

When studying organizational theory literature, it quickly becomes apparent that there is not just one theory of organization. Instead, a multitude of theories, originating in many fields, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, political science, public administration, all come together to become the "mishmash" that has been labeled organizational theory (Gortner, Mahler &

Nicholson). Early books on organizational theory tended to provide a survey of authors and their descriptions of different types of organizations (Pugh, Hickson & Hinings). There was a recognition that all organizations are different and that "it is possible to state these differences and to classify them, so that something useful can be said about various kinds of organizations and the ways in which they function" (Pugh, Hickson & Hinings 13). Thus, early books on organization concentrated on classifying and describing different types of organizations (March; Pugh) and, with the exception of authors like Max Weber, much of this early concentration was on private organizations. Some focused on the structure (Etzioni, Gouldner, Woodward), functioning (Barnard, Fayol, March) or management (Drucker, Simon, Taylor)[1], while others focused on people in the organization or the society in which the organization operated. Each author "tried to discover generalizations applicable to all organizations" (Pugh, Hickson & Hinings 13) in their attempt to create one theory of organization.

However, more recent authors have come to the realization that their earlier counterparts were attempting the impossible; one theory of organization will never exist. Due to their multidimensional nature, there is "disagreement about the purposes and uses of a theory of organization, the issues to which it should address itself (supervisory style, organizational culture), and the concepts and variables that should enter into such a theory" (Gortner, Mahler & Nicholson 6). Therefore, when discussing organizational theory, it is difficult to pinpoint one theory as adequate. Gortner, Mahler and Nicholson present a multi-theory

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[1] Summaries of the work of all nine researchers referred to here appear in Pugh, Hickson and Hinings' *Writers on Organizations*.

approach in *Organization Theory: A Public Perspective*, suggesting that "the question is not which theory to accept and which to discard, but how to establish a basis from which managers, informed by theory, can pick and choose useful concepts and devise strategies for action" (8). They separate the study of organizational theory into three categories: subject matter, type, and purpose. Within each category are several subcategories that help to discern the different aspects of an organization. For example, the types include systems theory, political economy, public choice, group politics and influence, personality and attitude formation, psychological humanism, culture interpretation, and social change. Once all the possibilities for the study of organizational theory have been outlined, the book divides organizational theory into two primary models: Weber's traditional model of bureaucracy and Deming's Total Quality Management. Weber's model is misrepresented[2] as the more mechanistic organization of public sector organizations, while Deming's Total Quality Management is presented as a model of how to organize the successful private sector business. Gortner, Mahler, and Nicholson argue that effective management of a public organization differs significantly from that of a private one, making suggestions for managers in the public sector. However, even though they seem to want to move beyond a more mechanistic approach to organizational theory, they appear to focus mostly on the structures of organizations, and how a leader can set up these structures.

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[2] Samier has reviewed the literature which critiques those authors misrepresenting Weber as mechanistic.

One of the most important authors who has provided a comprehensive overview and interpretation of organizational theory is Gareth Morgan, whose *Images of Organization* is most relied upon in this study. He takes the approach that "all theories of organization and management are based on implicit images or metaphors that lead us to see, understand, and manage organizations in distinctive yet partial ways" (4). Unlike Gortner, Mahler, and Nicholson, who do not really distinguish between the different types of organizational theory, Morgan employs a series of metaphors to examine the different aspects of organizations, such as organizations as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political structures, psychic prisons, flux and transformation, domination, and challenge. According to Morgan, "the challenge facing modern managers is to become accomplished in the art of using metaphor: To find appropriate ways of seeing, understanding, and shaping the situations with which they have to deal" (348). Like Gortner, Mahler, and Nicholson, he recognizes that no one theory can be applied to an organization and singularly explain, define, or guide what occurs in that organization. Instead, "organizations are many things at once. They are complex and multifaceted...That's why the challenges facing management are often so difficult" (347). However, he also recognizes that as people, "the metaphors and ideas through which we see and read situations influence how we act...those dominated by a culture lens tend to act in a way that shapes and reshapes culture" (350). This is an important caution to keep in mind while conducting this study, since as a participant observer, there is the possibility that during the conduct of the study I could have an influence on shaping the culture of one or both of the schools studied. Simply encouraging administrators and

staff members to think about culture and its different aspects could result in influencing actions that shape or change the culture of each school. Morgan states that in "any sustained endeavor we are guided by implicit root images that generate theories of what we are doing. It is vital we know what they are and the strengths and limitations they express" (377). Therefore, throughout my study, particularly in drawing conclusions from my research, it is important to remain aware of the limitations of the cultural lens through which I am viewing each school. Morgan also recognizes the limitations of examining organizations as metaphors as "management theories tend to sell the positive insights of a metaphor, while ignoring the limitations and distortions that it creates" (348). Thus, he cautions relying on only one metaphor by which to define an organization.

Several of the metaphors Morgan suggests could be used to study a school. He suggests that an organization is an organism that must function within its environment. In developing this metaphor, he discusses paradigms such as open systems, examining how they interact and depend upon their environment, the process of how organizations go about adapting to their environments, organizational life cycles, factors influencing organizational health and development, different species of organization, and the relations between these species and their ecology (34). The main focus of the organism metaphor is the impact of the environment on an organization: that is how an organization must change and adapt to reflect its ever-changing environment. This metaphor would work well in the study of a school, as the community surrounding a school has a profound influence on the students, staff and administrators. For example,

if the community is affluent, the students come to the school with a certain set of beliefs and values, and a successful school will recognize and build on the strengths of those beliefs and values. However, although using this metaphor would give one some insight as to where some of the beliefs and values influencing the school culture originated, it would only look at a very small aspect of school culture. Within this study, parent values, student values and staff values as seen through the eyes of administrators and staff will provide some insight into the influences of the external environment on school culture. However, as this is not the focus of the study, it will play only a minor role.

Another appropriate metaphor Morgan suggests that applies to a school is the organization as flux and transformation. This metaphor looks at a series of concepts including autopoiesis and complexity as well as chaos theory. In contrast to open systems theory, autopoiesis looks at the organization as a closed system, of which the environment is a part. "The environment is part of the...system, and...Changes do not arise as a result of external influences. They are produced by variations within the overall system that modify the basic mode of organization (Morgan 254). This theory warns that organizations that become "egocentric" (258) risk the danger of not seeing themselves as part of their environment, but instead seeing themselves as pitted against their environment. According to Morgan, "this leads them to overemphasize the importance of themselves while underplaying the significance of the wider system of relations in which they exist" (259). This is often a danger faced by schools, as tension between the union, which represents the teachers, and the school board, which represents the parents, can create an "us against them", or polarized, mentality.

In shaping the culture of a school, the principal undertakes the balancing act necessary to try to reduce this tension. According to autopoiesis, the community is a necessary part of the school's closed system. Therefore, part of creating an effective school culture is fostering positive and beneficial relationships with the community in which the school is located. This aspect of culture is touched on by each of the principals as they discuss activities that took place before each school opened.

Complexity and chaos theory both look at ways in which order often emerges from chaos. These theories look at how a small change in one part of a company can create an exponential change in the company as a whole. Morgan suggests that managers need to learn how to influence these small changes and that the larger changes will come on their own, concluding that managers should not try to control these larger changes. Thus, the small changes a principal makes, such as the telling of stories, can have a large effect on the overall school culture. Much of the effective schools literature (discussed in the "School Culture" section below) recommends various small changes principals can make to shape their schools' cultures. Complexity and chaos theories also point out that organizations are in a continuous state of transformation, and learning to accept and manage these changing contexts is extremely important. As a school's culture is an ever-changing phenomenon, this metaphor may prove useful in examining the principal's role in shaping this culture.

However, the most relevant chapter from Morgan to my study, of course, is the chapter which examines organizations as cultures. He begins with a discussion of where the culture metaphor originated. Prior to the 1970's,

organizations were mostly viewed as machines or organisms. However, early in the 1970's, Japanese companies achieved phenomenal success attributable largely to their cultures. This caused an increase in cultural research and theorizing. According to Morgan, "culture shapes the character of the organization" (126). In studying an organization's culture, Morgan suggests taking the role of an anthropologist by observing the day-to-day activities of a company. It is only in this way that "one becomes aware of the patterns of interaction between individuals, the language that is used, the images and themes explored in conversation, and the various rituals of daily routine" (130). This is exactly what I planned to do in this study: discuss the day-to-day happenings at each school with various teachers and the principal. The advantage of this approach is it looks at the human perspective of an organization, unlike many of the other metaphors that look at organizations more mechanistically. As well, Morgan recognizes the crucial role of leaders in shaping the values that guide an organization. Within the school system, the principal is one of the key figures who shapes these guiding values. An important aspect of culture is that the history of an organization can shape the present. This is one reason why I have chosen to study the development of culture at two new secondary schools. In this way, I can examine the culture of each organization right from its inception. "Culture is not something that can be imposed on a social setting. Rather, it develops during the course of social interaction" (Morgan 137). At the end of his chapter on culture, Morgan leaves the reader with two cautions regarding the culture metaphor: one that culture is

"an ongoing, proactive process of reality construction" (141), and secondly "it is difficult to judge a culture from the outside" (125).

Thus, I must always be aware of my role as a participant observer and my own constructions of reality. For the purposes of this study, this was particularly important when describing the culture of the school in which I teach. My own visions of its culture may be different from those of my participants, and I needed to be sure that my own viewpoints did not bias my recording. As well, participants will also be influenced by their own constructions of reality, which may explain differences in how participants see the culture of their school or differences between how the principals see the culture as compared to how teachers see it. For the interviewees from each school, an insider approach to culture can be taken, as they are a part of the culture they are describing. As well, interviewing each participant twice over the course of a semester provides consideration for the ever-changing nature of culture.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Recognition of the organization as a culture has been the subject of many authors over the past twenty years (Gagliardi; Morgan; Schein, 2nd Ed.; Schultz; Smircich; Trice & Beyer). Unlike the previous emphasis on formal aspects of the organization found in the conventional metaphors of the organization as a machine or organism, the culture metaphor examines more informal aspects of an organization such as myths, rituals, stories, heroes, ceremonies, artifacts, ethos, and aesthetics that become part of our lived understanding (Gagliardi;

Schultz; Trice & Beyer). Although these authors, for the most part, theorize about the cultures of organizations in the private domain, their work still relates to the study of culture within the school system, since the differences between public and private are not significant for this type of work. The educational system in British Columbia has its own shared culture, of which each individual school is a subculture.

According to Smircich, "the cultural concept has been borrowed from anthropology, where there is no consensus on its meaning. [Therefore] it should be no surprise that there is also variety in its application to organizational studies" ("Concepts of Culture" 339). Accordingly, these differing conceptions of culture give rise to differing research approaches. Smircich provides a survey of these in "Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis." She claims that culture and organization both have differing images of order, and therefore she links these into five themes in organization and management theory: cross-cultural or comparative management, corporate culture, organizational cognition, organizational symbolism, and unconscious processes and organization (342). She then examines each of these using a symbolic approach, with the first three themes using culture as a variable, and the last two as the root metaphor. She argues that the corporate world sees culture as an internal variable that contributes to the effectiveness of the organization (344). It is on this premise that much of the effective schools literature is based (DuFour & Eaker; Stolp, *Transforming School Culture*; Deal & Peterson, *Shaping School Culture*). Many of these authors argue that culture is something that can be molded and manipulated by management to achieve desired results. However, those who

see culture as a root metaphor "leave behind the view that a culture is something an organization *has*, in favor of the view that a culture is something an organization *is*" (Smircich, "Concepts of Culture" 347). The fourth theme, organizational symbolism is the one that is most relevant to this study. This view of culture sees organizations as expressive forms that are constantly changing and evolving. According to Smircich, researchers who adopt this view focus their analysis on how individuals interpret and understand their experiences and how this determines their actions ("Concepts of Culture" 351). Thus, the ways in which staff members interpret the actions of the principal will have profound effects on how they see the culture of the school and their role in it.

Another prominent researcher in the cultural arena is Majken Schultz. In *On Studying Organizational Cultures*, he presents a synopsis of much of the organizational culture theory, grouping theorists into three categories: rationalist, functionalist, and symbolic. He then eliminates the rationalists as an area for further discussion, as he feels they reduce the organization to a machine metaphor. The remainder of his book focuses on the functional and symbolic approaches. Schultz examines a Danish government organization using each approach to show the differences between the two and how each can be applied in the analysis of an organization's culture. His study is unique and helpful here, as it examines the culture of a public organization. More importantly for this project, he builds on Schein's functionalist theory to create a framework for actually studying the culture of an organization. According to Schultz, "a cultural way of studying organizations is to study the meaning of organizational behavior – or more specifically, the meanings and beliefs which members of organizations

assign to organizational behavior and how these assigned meanings influence the ways in which they behave themselves" (5). In his definition of functionalism, "the organization is a collective which seeks survival by performing necessary functions: culture is a pattern of shared values and basic assumptions which perform functions concerning external adaptation and internal integration" (14). This approach to the study of organizational culture developed from classical anthropology and organizational systems theory that demonstrate how social systems continue to survive and adapt (Schultz 15). According to Schultz, "functionalism both provides a functional explanation of the existence of organizational culture and rests the empirical analysis of organizational culture on its specific functions within the organization" (21). He uses Schein's functionalist approach, which states that survival in and adaptation to the external environment, and integration of its internal processes to ensure the capacity to continue to survive and adapt are the two fundamental problems an organization must resolve in order to survive (Schein, 2nd Ed. 51).

The second approach Schultz takes to organizational culture is the symbolic. "The symbolist orientation perceives organizations as human systems which express patterns of symbolic actions" (Schultz 15). According to him, "the symbolic paradigm assumes that humans actively define and create their own reality...reality is social constructions within which people act using their own definition of the situation. These social constructions derive from a collective creation of meaning whereby the same actions can be accorded different meanings" (76). Much of his symbolic approach is based on the work of Smircich. Although not as relevant to this study as the functional approach, some

of the symbolism surrounding school mottos and slogans and their collective meanings will be examined.

The author who has made a significant contribution to the field, and who is most frequently referenced in the area of organizational culture, is Edgar Schein. Schein began his culture research in the early 1970's, using the newly abundant research on the success of Japanese companies as a starting point. Japanese companies were recording huge successes, while their American counterparts were floundering (Pascale & Athos). Researchers began to look for a reason for this divergence and many concluded that it resulted from the different cultures of the two working environments. These findings sparked many theories about organizational culture (e.g. Hofstede; Deal and Kennedy; Peters and Waterman; Smircich; Schein, 2nd Ed.; Morgan). However, although much theorizing has focussed on the organization as a culture, "there are...[few] examples of how actual organizational cultures can be studied and described in real life" (Schultz 1). Schein is one of the few who has developed an approach for examining an organization's culture suitable for this study.

Schein's functionalist definition of organizational culture is the one primarily adopted by this study. A functionalist view of culture takes the opposite approach to Smircich's symbolic approach. It views culture as something an organization has as opposed to culture as something an organization is. A functionalist approach investigates the causes and effects of organizational culture questioning the relative effectiveness (Reichers & Schneider). In *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Schein demonstrates that "organizational culture helps to explain many organizational phenomena, that culture can aid or

hinder organizational effectiveness, and that leadership is the fundamental process by which organizational cultures are formed and changed." (*1st Ed.* ix). According to him, "culture [is] the result of entrepreneurial activities by company founders, leaders of movements, institution builders, and social architects" (*1st Ed.* xi). Therefore he argues that "organizational cultures are created by leaders, and…the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture" (*1st Ed.* 2). This is the foundation upon which my study is built: that the principal plays a role in creating the culture of a school. Once the importance of studying culture, and the leader's role in creating culture, has been determined, Schein describes culture as "a pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration – that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." (*1st Ed.* 9). It is this pattern of assumptions and values and how they were formed that this study examines.

Schein suggests that the way to do this is by breaking culture down into three categories: artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions (*1st Ed.* 14). Artifacts are those things that are visible representations of culture: what an observer can see, hear, or feel. "Physical space, the technological output of the group, its written and spoken language, artistic productions, and the overt behaviour of its members" (*1st Ed.* 14) are all examples of artifacts. Within the school setting, artifacts include school logos and colours, school mottos and slogans, room and resource allocations, and building layout. Schein cautions

that while it is easy to observe artifacts, it is more difficult to figure out what they mean (1ˢᵗ Ed. 15). Thus, participants in my study were questioned as to their views of how mottos and slogans reflect school culture in hopes of discovering a collective meaning. This leads to the second level in interpreting culture: espoused values. According to Schein, "if one wants to achieve this level of understanding…one can attempt to analyze the central values that provide the day-to-day operating principles by which the members of the culture guide their behavior" (1ˢᵗ Ed. 15). These values form when the group is faced with a problem. One member of the group, usually the leader, proposes a solution based on his/her beliefs or values. However the group will not share this value until the solution is successful. For example, espoused values in a school are reflected in mission and vision statements, and in the spoken values held by staff and administrators. Once a group has developed shared values, it begins to move towards the third level of culture: the unconscious development of underlying assumptions. "Values have a higher level of consciousness than basic assumptions, because they are not accepted as the natural reality and can be made the object of discussion" (Schultz 28). However, "as the values begin to be taken for granted, they gradually become beliefs and assumptions and drop out of consciousness" (Schein, 1ˢᵗ Ed. 16). These basic assumptions become "theories-in-use" that actually guide behavior, indicating to group members how to perceive, think about, and felt about things…[and] tend to be nonconfrontable and nondebatable" (1ˢᵗ Ed. 18). Corbett, Firestone, and Rossman refer to these nonconfrontable and nondebatable basic assumptions as "sacred norms" (37) and argue that it is when these sacred norms are challenged that resistance

occurs. According to Corbett, Firestone and Rossman, "such norms need not be shared uniformly in a school, but they are likely to be more powerful the more more widely they are held" (38). Therefore, to avoid or be prepared for teacher resistance to change, it is important for principals to be aware of the sacred norms of their staff.

Basic assumptions, unlike artifacts and values, are invisible and therefore very difficult to uncover. To uncover basic assumptions, a cultural analyst must "go behind the overtly visible or audible cultural features and attempt to dig out the deepest analytical strata which determine what the culture's members in fact do" (Schultz 30). At the school level, basic assumptions can be uncovered through discussions of shared values, through the types of professional development that occur, and through comments about the school culture and advice to new staff members. The visible artifacts and espoused values are a surface reflection of the underlying assumptions of an organization. Of course, sometimes the espoused values of an organization do not reflect its underlying assumptions. Members of an organization may say one thing, while acting in a way that contradicts their spoken values. This makes the recording of culture a difficult task requiring a heavy investment in time and careful observation as well as good listening and interpreting skills.

Even though my approach in this study primarily follows Schein's functionalist theory, to some extent, I use the symbolic approach in examining the school logos, mottos and slogans. Morgan, Frost, and Pondy criticize traditional organization and management theory as it "has failed to grasp the full significance and importance of the symbolic side of organizational life" (3).

Symbols represent more than what they literally are. They encompass artifacts, rituals, language, and actions which "are created subjectively and are invested with a particular kind of subjective meaning" (Morgan, Frost, & Pondy 5). According to them, "organizational life is rich in various forms of ritual activity, tradition, patterns of humour, story-telling, and various kinds of metaphorical imagery which contribute to the development of distinctive kinds of cultural milieux within the organization" (9-10). As well, the meaning of symbols will vary from person to person. For the purposes of my study, this means that each teacher and principal may have a different interpretation of how the logo, motto, and slogans reflect the staff and students and how each contributes to the culture of the school. These symbols of the school, and the meaning derived from them, will reflect different aspects of each school's culture.

Smircich, as mentioned above, is a prominent author who examines the symbolic approach to organizational culture. She argues that symbolic processes such as "organizational rituals, organizational slogans, vocabulary, and presidential style contribute to, and are part of, the development of shared meanings which give form and coherence to the experience of organization members" ("Organizations as Shared Meanings" 55). According to Smircich, the character, or "ethos" of an organization is expressed in "patterns of belief (ideology), activity (norms and rituals), language and other symbolic forms through which organization members both create and sustain their view of the world and image of themselves in the world. The development of a world view with its shared understanding of group identity, purpose and direction are products of the unique history, personal interactions and environmental

circumstances of the group" ("Organizations as Shared Meanings" 56). Smircich sees the culture of a company developing from its historical development, struggles for leadership within the company, and from the ideology of its leader ("Organizations as Shared Meanings" 58). The focus of researchers examining this aspect of culture is on how the language, symbols, myths, stories and rituals yield and shape meanings and are fundamental to the organization's existence (Smircich, "Concepts of Culture" 353). Thus, although this study primarily uses a functionalist approach, in examining the logos, mottos, and slogans, the symbolic will also be considered.

SCHOOL CULTURE

As my study pertains to the culture of two secondary schools, it is necessary to examine the literature on school culture. This field is broad; however, it mostly focuses on ways in which to change or reform the culture of an already existing school or school district (DuFour & Eaker; Sergiovanni, *The Lifeworld of Leadership*; Deal & Peterson, *Shaping School Culture;* Stolp, *Transforming School Culture*). There is currently a dissatisfaction among educators and the public with schools as they presently operate (Walker & Dimmock 3), creating an outcry for school reform. According to Walker and Dimmock, "educational systems, leaders and teachers throughout the world are eagerly seeking ways to improve their schools" (3). One of the ways they are doing so is by looking at ways to improve school culture as it is believed that culture and school effectiveness are closely linked. According to Sergiovanni,

"culture is generally thought of as the normative glue that holds a particular school together. With shared visions, values, and belief at its heart, culture serves as a compass setting, steering people in a common direction. It provides norms that govern the way people interact with each other. It provides a framework for deciding what does, or does not make sense" (*The Lifeworld of Leadership* 1). Without this "glue," a school cannot be a successful learning community. Therefore, the culture of a school will have a profound effect on the achievement of students, the happiness of staff, and the overall efficiency of the school (Lane; Peterson; Reavis, Vinson, & Fox; Sagor). Bolman and Deal echo this in their claim that "strong cultures produce results...In companies where these cultural elements are cohesive, consistent, and widely shared, people know what is expected and what needs to be done and are motivated and committed to doing a good job" (152). The research on effective schools has consistently shown that these schools have an atmosphere that is conducive to learning (Levine).

However, although many have written about school reform, there are few writers who have tackled the difficult task of creating a culture. Much of the literature in this area is American, such as Terrence Deal and Kent Peterson's *Shaping School Culture* and Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker's *Creating the New American School.* Deal and Peterson focus on the elements of culture that help to create an effective school environment where students, staff and administrators can work together to produce the best possible results.

They make an argument for the importance of fostering an effective school

culture, believing

> the term culture provides a more accurate and intuitively
> appealing way to help school leaders better understand their
> school's own unwritten rules and traditions, norms, and
> expectations that seem to permeate everything: the way people
> act, how they dress, what they talk about or avoid talking about,
> whether they seek out colleagues for help or don't, and how
> teachers feel about their work and their students. (*Shaping
> School Culture* 2-3)

Their approach is unique, as at the outset of Chapter One surprisingly they agree

with the common public criticism that schools should operate more like

businesses. However, this position is not quite what it seems. While they agree

that schools need to develop a healthy culture, much like a successful business

does, they argue that schools do not need to be reformed through policies and

mandates made by this kind of external force. According to Deal and Peterson,

schools need to develop cultures in which rituals, visions, missions, ceremonies,

histories, stories, architecture, and artifacts all play a role. They argue that

"teaching staff and administrators can lead the way to successful cultures where

students learn" (*Shaping School Culture* xi). Each chapter deals with a different

aspect of culture, providing illustrations of each aspect at work in schools

throughout the United States. They also identify factors that create negative

cultures (what they refer to as "toxic" cultures) and offer tips for circumventing

crisis when a school starts heading in this direction as well as how to transform a

culture that is already toxic. Deal and Peterson conclude with a chapter outlining

the importance of connecting school and community cultures. They argue that

"communities often view schools as museums of virtue, storehouses of

memories, and prime sources of local pride…schools are highly symbolic institutions for any community, whether rural, suburban, or urban" (*Shaping School Culture* 129). The book is very much a "how-to" guide for creating culture and offers many inspiring examples of schools with effective school cultures. However, while inspiring, it is a bit overwhelming, as creating such a culture would take a great deal of time, hard work, and cooperation on the part of staff, students, parents, and administrators. Deal and Peterson also fail to provide examples of instances where attempts to create an effective culture have failed.

DuFour and Eaker's *Creating the New American School* is also aimed more at school improvement than creating a new school culture. However, the suggestions in this book can just as easily be applied to a new school as to an existing school. This is the text on which the principal of school number two based much of the creation of the culture at his present school. He provided copies of portions of the text for staff members prior to the school opening, using these readings as a starting point for discussions of developing the school culture. Similar to Deal and Peterson, DuFour and Eaker look at aspects of school culture such as developing a shared vision of an excellent school, developing shared values, the principal's role in leading and in managing the school climate, and the role of celebration. However, they go one step further, taking a more holistic approach by including the more practical aspects of school life: the curriculum and teaching. They show how all these areas must reflect and work towards maintaining the school culture. The concluding chapter outlines the importance of sustaining the improvement process. Much like Deal and Peterson's book, this one is highly inspirational and provides very positive

examples of the successful development of school cultures. However it focuses too much on the bottom line: an effective school culture is determined by measuring student success. In effect, they write a recipe for success, assuming that if a principal has the right ingredients (staff, funding, resources), it can work effectively.

One of the main problems with the literature on effective schools and creating effective school cultures is that it is too superficial. Each author appears to describe a process that is superficial and simplistic, using only examples of schools where the process has worked phenomenally well. Most authors do not deal with the resistance and conflict that can occur, when trying to change the culture of a school. Good cultural literature, such as Corbett, Firestone, and Rossman's "Resistance to Planned Change and the Sacred in School Cultures" or Sarason's *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* takes into account these complexities. According to Corbett, Firestone, and Wilson,

> viewing the school as a culture offers an important additional lens for understanding how teachers respond to change. The problem is that most innovations seek to change behavior – to alter discrete observable, describable, and tangible actions. Not enough attention is paid to the meaning of those changes and how those meanings fit with the sacred core of the school's culture. (40)

Thus, in trying to reform a school's culture, principals must take into account the sacred norms of their staff. Much of the effective schools literature appears to overlook this important consideration. Sarason criticizes that "many people having a role in, or concern for, educational planning and change possess no intimate knowledge of the culture of the setting they wish to influence and change" (8). This lack of cultural understanding leads to reform initiatives that

meet with much resistance at the school level. Much of the effective schools literature appears to have this same problem. As the culture of each school is diverse, it is impossible to provide a manual that will be effective in every unique school culture, and yet this is what is being attempted. This literature also fails to recognize that "many of those who comprise the school culture do not seek change or react enthusiastically to it" (9). This complete disregard for resistance to change makes this literature superficial in its dealings with school culture.

LEADERSHIP

As this study looks at the role of the principal in creating culture, it is necessary to review the literature on leadership. Leadership, like culture, is a difficult word to define. There is much debate over what qualities and descriptions of function should be included. Of course, the term has been used through the centuries, beginning with Plato, Sun Tzu, and Machiavelli, but all had different theories regarding the nature of leadership. And over the centuries, we have become no clearer in our concepts of leadership. Bennis argued that "of all the hazy and confounding areas in social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for top nomination. And, ironically, probably more has been written and less known about leadership than about any other topic in the behavioural sciences" (259). According to Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach, "most of the variation in leadership concepts, types or models can be accounted for by differences in who exerts influence, the nature of that influence, the purposes for the exercise of influence, and its outcomes" (6). So, like other

aspects of organizational theory, leadership has been broken down into subsections and types.

Leadership stems from two traditions: the political-historical model of leadership and the business management and public administration model of leadership (Foster 40). The first approach examines the great leaders of the past and their characteristics; the latter examines the role of administrators in their work environments. As the political-historical model focuses mainly on the characteristics of leaders, it has also been labeled the traits approach (Watkins). According to Watkins, this method of studying leadership examines both the physical traits and personality traits of leaders to create the "great man" myth, where a leader possesses certain traits the people relate to good leadership. This approach has been criticized because, as Stogdill found in his study of 124 papers on leadership traits, it ignores the fact that certain leadership traits, in certain situations, produce inconsistent results. Stogdill found that "leadership is a relation that exists between persons in a social situation, and that persons who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in other situations (126). He also found that the traits required by a given leader differ depending on the situation (123).

Burns' *Leadership*, provides a more comprehensive theoretical approach. He breaks the political-historical model down into two sub-categories: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership is based on the exchanges between leaders and followers. Foster, in synopsizing Burns, provides the example of politicians and voters (41). "Transformational leadership is the ability of an individual to envision a new social condition and to

communicate this vision to followers" (Foster 41). The goal of a transformational leader is to help create new social realities. Thus, a leader's morality is extremely important in transformational leadership. Foster criticizes Burns for seeing leadership as residing in an individual and for ignoring the fact that often leadership is not voluntary, but instead is determined by the situation. Foster also criticizes the change in meaning of the term transformational in recent leadership literature. He argues that leaders are no longer seen as trying to transform society, but instead as trying to transform their organizations to produce better profits (45). This faulty definition of transformational leadership permeates much of the effective schools literature. Foster concludes that leadership must be critical, transformative, educative and ethical to truly be leadership. According to Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach, transformational leadership focuses on "the commitments and capacities of organizational members" (8).

The business management and public administration model of leadership defines leadership as a function of organizational position (Foster 43). This more traditional view of leadership is functionalist, exploring "the extent that the designated leaders of organizations determine the outcomes of the organization and the behaviour of its lower ranks" (Watkins 9). According to this model, leadership is goal oriented: "leadership becomes getting the employees to do what management wants them to do" (Foster 44). This is similar to what Watkins labels the situational approach. This method suggests that leadership is determined by the situation: different situations call for different types of

leadership. Foster criticizes this approach as describing management and not leadership and Watkins criticizes it as being too unidirectional.

A third approach to the study of leadership is Fiedler's Contingency Model of Leadership. He attempts to combine the traits and situational approaches. Grint describes this as trying to match the qualities of the leader with the situation (88). Fiedler defines a leader as "the individual in the group given the task of directing and co-ordinating task relevant group activities or who in the absence of a designated leader, carries the primary responsibility for performing these functions in the group" (8). Fiedler's model has been criticized for its lack of consistency and the vagueness about what is actually being measured (Watkins 17).

More recent views of leadership examine the relationship between leaders and those who are led. Smircich moves away from the more functional approach and examines leadership as a type of social construction. As such, "organizational structure and human action and conduct [are] not separate entities but rather...a duality in which people both shape and are shaped by the continually emerging power relationships within the organization" (Watkins 30). This helps to create the culture of the organization, since it considers human agency. These principles of Smircich's work are used to guide this study, as participants are asked to explain what they see the principal's role being in shaping culture. How they see this role will be determined by their own creations of meaning where leadership is concerned.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The literature on educational leadership echoes the movements in leadership

literature. Just as in the general leadership literature, there has been a

movement away from trait and action theories to follower theories focusing on

why followers choose to accept certain individual as leaders. Over the past two

decades, there has also been a renewed interest in values and moral leadership.

Peter Gronn, in *Management and Leadership in Education: The Making of*

Educational Leaders, examines the ways in which educational leaders are

formed. He begins with a brief summation of the arguments distinguishing

between leadership and administration and management, concluding that

leadership may include administrative and managerial duties, but these duties by

themselves do not make someone a leader (5). Instead, Gronn argues that

leadership requires influence and identification. A leader is a person who

influences followers who want to be influenced and there is an emotional bond

between leaders and followers allowing the latter to identify with the former. This

is an interesting and somewhat unique approach, previously taken by

Machiavelli, Barnard, and Weber, as it brings the role of followers to the forefront

of the relationship, instead of just focussing on the role of the leader. Throughout

the rest of his book, Gronn examines what he refers to as "a career model of

leadership," which includes an assessment of the different aspects of what

makes someone a leader, such as identities, values, and styles. He identifies

framing missions and visions as a primary focus (92). These are some of the first

jobs for a principal who is trying to create an effective school culture. According

to Gronn, "a vision is a conception of an outcome or desired future state of affairs for an organization which, to be accepted and endorsed, has to be consistent with values that people live by day to day or else it will fail to inspire genuine enthusiasm" (93). Usually the primary vision of a school is to create a learning environment in which students can achieve their highest potential. However, creating a vision that makes this possible is a difficult task facing school leadership.

Another prominent figure in the study of educational leadership and culture is Thomas Sergiovanni. His book, *The Principalship: A Reflective Practice Perspective* investigates different types of leadership perspectives, "mystics," "neats," and "scruffies," and how each perspective approaches different leadership tasks. At the outset, he discards mystics as a category for discussion, as this group eliminates the need for theory immediately, and simply relies on intuition. Neats view educational administration as an applied science and rely on theory and research to determine best practices, whereas scruffies view educational administration as a craft, where theory and research interact with professional experience. Sergiovanni argues that "Neats accept the research on effective teaching without question" (*The Principalship* 5), and this is problematic, as the world of practice rarely consciously considers theory. Instead he supports the scruffies' view of educational administration. Sergiovanni claims that "interpretive and personal reflection can be enhanced by principals learning more about their theories of practice; by critiquing them; by broadening their content, substance, and structure; and by linking them more deliberately to practice

episodes" (*The Principalship* 12). His book is a guide to help principals reflect on their own theories of practice.

In considering one's theory of practice, Sergiovanni moves on to a common goal of principals: creating an effective school. He questions whether the word "effective" is actually being used to mean what researchers intend. He points out that in much of the research on "effective" schools, effectiveness is measured by student achievement on standardized tests. Although this would be one area for consideration, this is not the only factor most would consider when judging a school's effectiveness. Another term Sergiovanni questions is "efficiency". He suggests that an efficient school is one that is well organized, and therefore, efficiency has more to do with management than leadership. Sergiovanni concludes that what one should strive for is a "good" school, which he defines as one that is not only effective and efficient, but also one that has the following characteristics: "things 'hang together"; a sense of purpose exists, rallying people to a common cause; work has meaning, and life is significant; teachers and students work together and with spirit; and accomplishments are readily recognized" (*The Principalship* 77). Sergiovanni suggests that principals make choices throughout each day that have a profound effect on the school, arguing that "one hallmark of a successful principal is her or his ability to expand the area of choices and thus reduce demands and constraints. This extra margin of latitude makes an important difference in enhancing the overall effectiveness of the school" (*The Principalship* 24).

Sergiovanni also spends considerable time debating traditional management theory and what he refers to as his new theory for the principalship.

He argues that traditional management theory is very bureaucratic, and therefore structured and linear in nature, while his new theory is nonlinear and loosely structured. He gives brief consideration to the terms "management" and "leadership", concluding that "management is concerned with doing things right...Leadership is concerned with doing right things" (*The Principalship* 44). When examining the authority of the principal, Sergiovanni, like Gronn, emphasizes the role of the follower. He suggests that if people are responding only to the administrator's authority, they become subordinates and will do their job and no more (traditional management theory). However, a principal's job is to transform people into followers, who respond to ideas, values, beliefs and purposes (*The Principalship* 49). He argues that

> when subordinateness is transcended by followership, a different
> kind of hierarchy emerges in the school. Principals, teachers,
> students, parents, and others find themselves equally
> subordinate to a set of ideas, and shared conceptions to which
> they are committed. As a result, teachers respond and comply
> not because of the principal's directives, but out of a sense of
> obligation and commitment to these shared values. (*The
> Principalship* 328)

Rewards are also a common motivation in traditional theories of management. Once again, Sergiovanni argues that rewards will get subordinates to do the work, but once the rewards are removed, the work will end. He argues that this theory needs to be broadened to "a motivational strategy that recognizes the importance of morality, emotions, and social bonds...What counts to most people are what they believe, how they feel, and the shared norms and cultural messages that emerge from the small groups and communities with which they identify" (*The Principalship* 57). Although he recognizes the importance of ethics

and morality in his discussion of the principalship, he never actually states what a moral or ethical principal would look like, nor does he take a theoretical approach to morality or ethics.

Sergiovanni claims that a new theory of practice needs to take culture into account. In his discussion of school culture, he relies on Schein's theory of organizational culture, and really adds nothing new. He concludes that "leadership is a personal thing. It comprises three important dimensions – one's heart [values], head [theories] and hand [actions]" (*The Principalship* 321). Sergiovanni provides a summary of much of the work in the educational leadership and culture fields, but adds very little new theory. However, his work is very accessible, which is probably why it is so often quoted by the effective schools theorists. This is rather ironic considering his criticism of those who adopt that research whole-heartedly without considering its pitfalls.

Many authors have explored the interaction between developing an effective school culture and school leadership. Deal and Peterson outline the requirements for a successful school cultural leader:

> Successful schools possess leaders who can read, assess, and reinforce core rituals, traditions, and values. Successful schools have leadership emanating from many people – leadership that maintains and supports learning for all students, as well as learning for staff. Successful cultures have leaders who know deep down in their hearts how important schools are to children and want to make them the best places they can be. Successful cultures have leaders who can cope with the paradoxes of their work and take advantage of the opportunities of the future. (xiii)

These characteristics are very similar to Burns' definitions of transformational leadership, outlined above in the "Leadership" section. Leithwood and Jantzi

suggest that "transformational approaches to leadership have long been advocated as productive under conditions fundamentally the same as those faced by schools targeted for reform" (112). They echo the arguments of Burns, that transformational leadership fosters higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals, which will result in extra effort and greater productivity (Burns; Leithwood & Jantzi 113). They examine transformational leadership along six dimensions: building school vision and goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, symbolizing professional practices and values, demonstrating high performance expectations, and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions (113). The goal of their study is to examine the effects of transformational leadership on school effectiveness as measured by student engagement with school. Leithwood and Jantzi discovered that transformational leadership "has strong, significant direct effects on organizational conditions" but actually had little effect on student participation and interaction, and that home culture had a much larger effect (120). However, they caution that the interpretation of these results may mean that transformational leadership is ineffective, as school organizational conditions will have an effect on student participation and engagement.

According to Deal and Kennedy, one of the keys to an organization's productivity is its culture, and that culture can be shaped by the organization's leader. Kottkamp confirms this in his argument that the leadership behaviour of the principal has a profound effect on the culture of the school (152). Therefore, the principal is one person who has a large impact on shaping a school's culture. While there is much research on how leaders can reform an already existing

school culture[3], not many studies have been done which examine the role of the principal in creating a school's culture (Kottkamp 153). In fact, "very few educators ... [have] analyze[d] how cultures vary among schools or the ways in which principals can create cultures that are more conducive to effective instruction" (Firestone & Wilson 3). Thus, much of the literature presented in this section actually looks at how already existing cultures can be shaped by the principal. The assumption one could make is that many of the same principles will apply to creating a school culture.

Both of the principals participating in my study have had the difficult task of opening new schools, which means they had to create a new culture. One school began when a nearby high school became overcrowded and it was necessary to divide it into two schools. The other school was built in an area that had lobbied local politicians for a number of years. The students came from two nearby, overcrowded, rival schools. Thus, although all the students were coming from overcrowded conditions, the one school had to deal with two previous and somewhat clashing cultures, while the other school only had to deal with one previous culture.

A number of authors, including Sergiovanni, have focussed on the leader's role in creating a successful school. According to Sergiovanni, "most successful school leaders will tell you that getting the culture right and paying attention to how parents, teachers, and students define and experience meaning are two widely accepted rules for creating effective schools" (*The Lifeworld of Leadership*

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[3] Ortiz and Hendrick have conducted an interesting study looking at the leadership styles of three superintendents and their roles in reforming the organizational culture of their respective school districts.

1). Kottkamp presents a similar view by arguing that "when a culture is strong and cohesive, it provides a sort of multiplier effect for individual work efforts. Individuals are supported, guided, and given identity by a social web which moves them toward common goals" (152). And creating and maintaining effective schools is of great importance to many students, parents, teachers, administrators, and governments worldwide. The principal has the difficult job of creating and fostering school culture. For each of these principals, there was a wide range not only in the ways in which parents and students defined and experienced meaning, but in the ways in which staff members did as well. And this range had to be brought together and shaped into one school culture. One of the first jobs of each principal was to hire a staff from schools throughout the district. It is with this staff that the building of a successful school culture began. According to Firestone and Wilson, the culture of a school influences teacher commitments such as willingness to keep working at the school, emotional ties to the school, and willingness to follow the rules and norms that govern behaviour (4). So, developing a school culture that would do these things was extremely important in the first year of operation. If much of the staff transfers at the end of the first year, or has forged no ties with the school, or did not "buy into" decisions about everyday behaviors at the school (such as the no hat policy), by the end of the first year, then the school culture may be non-existent or very negative. However, "to be a cultural leader...requires faith that in time a strong culture will serve as a powerful guide to member behavior and patience to all cultural modifications to become internalized means of control" (Kottkamp 154). The culture of a school will have a significant effect on the achievement of its students

and "the individual efforts of employees supported by an effective culture tend to lift educational efforts to greatness" (Cunningham & Gresso 260). Developing an effective staff culture is the first step towards creating an effective school culture.

Schein states that "cultures begin with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on a group" and the general belief is that developing "the 'right' kind of culture will influence how effective organizations are" (2nd Ed. 1-3). According to Huffman and Hipp, "building a professional learning community is difficult due to the many demands on teachers and administrators...To develop, nurture, and sustain a community of learners means creating a...culture that includes a shared vision, true collaboration, administrator and teacher leadership, and conditions that support these efforts" (3). Thus, once the hiring is complete, the principal has this difficult job of beginning to create a school culture.

According to Schein, "culture basically springs from three sources; (1) the beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders of organizations; (2) the learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves; and (3) new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders" (2nd Ed. 211). This study will examine the beliefs of the founder, or the principal, as well as the beliefs of two founding staff members and one teacher new to the school this year.

In order to develop an effective school culture, there are several areas a principal can focus on. Johnson argues that the "principal must give special attention to the articulation, display, dissemination, and shaping of values in their school" (83). Firestone and Wilson suggest three things a principal should do when trying to shape a school's culture. First of all, principals must be

knowledgeable of their own cultural preferences. That is, they must know "what [their]...own values, task definitions, and commitments are" as these will play a prominent role in shaping the school culture (6). Secondly, they can stress the themes of the school through the creation of artifacts, such as symbols and rituals. This repetition of themes, through visual means, helps to stress their importance (Firestone & Wilson 5). Thirdly, principals have the potential to be active communicators of the school's culture as they have numerous opportunities throughout each day in unscheduled, impromptu conversations to shape a culture that effectively supports instruction (7). According to Huffman and Hipp, if the principal does not "have a vision, it is impossible to develop effective policies, procedures, and strategies targeted toward a future goal, or aligned to provide consistent implementation of programs...An effective vision presents a credible yet realistic picture of the organization that inspires the participants to reach for a future goal" (6). Kottkamp suggests that this vision must be more than just goals; it must include a school's mission, values and social norms (155). This is consistent with Schein's conclusions that "founders not only choose the basic mission and the environmental context in which the new group will operate, but they choose the group members and bias the original responses that the group makes in its efforts to succeed in its environment and to integrate itself" (2nd *Ed.* 212). Bolman and Deal echo this in their claim that "strong cultures produce results...In companies where these cultural elements are cohesive, consistent, and widely shared, people know what is expected and what needs to be done and are motivated and committed to doing a good job" (152).

As one can see from the above research, studying the culture of an organization (or school) is a daunting task, as culture is an ever-changing phenomenon. However, developing an effective school culture is critical to the success of a school (success meaning the happiness, motivation, and commitment of staff and students and the achievement of students). Each principal in the study has based decisions and actions around developing a positive school culture. The study examines how their beliefs, values, and assumptions have influenced these decisions and actions, and what the outcome has been. As well, the study considers how these beliefs, values, and assumptions have been translated to staff and whether staff shares them or has developed their own.

Chapter Three

Methodology

RESEARCH APPROACH

Through interviewing each principal, and some members of staff, I hope to answer my primary research question: "What is the principal's role in developing the culture of a new secondary school?" I have examined this question by breaking it down into several sub-questions based on Schein's analysis of culture. What actions have the principals done intentionally to develop culture? What artifacts have they developed? What do they see as their espoused values? What are their underlying assumptions? What were the outcomes of their ideas? Why do they think outcomes occurred? What were the similarities and differences between the two school cultures? As school districts grow in population, and more new schools open, the development of culture in these schools, and the principal's role in shaping it, will become increasingly more relevant. The goal of my research is to help future principals who are faced with the daunting task of opening a new secondary school better appreciate the ways they can aid in the development of culture at their schools. Hopefully this

qualitative study will generate what Maxwell regards as "results and theories that are understandable and experientially credible, both to the people [I] am studying and to others" (21). Of course, there will never be a "recipe for success" and some ideas will work or not work depending on the situation and the individual. However, hopefully this case study will provide some suggestions and ideas that can act as a starting point.

Because my research question deals with culture, I chose a predominantly qualitative approach, as this is the most appropriate approach for cultural studies according to Van Maanen. A qualitative comparative case study design has given me the clearest insight into the development of culture at two schools. I have chosen to compare two schools, as comparison helps to illuminate the reasons why certain aspects of culture have developed (Maxwell 72). As well, focusing the study on two principals, instead of only one, will give more validity to my findings. Much of my theoretical research on qualitative studies relied on the work of Joseph Maxwell, as the interactive approach he suggests in *Qualitative Research Design* provided a very practical approach for this study. According to Maxwell, "qualitative researchers typically study a relatively small number of individuals or situations and preserve the individuality of each of these in their analyses, rather than collecting data from large samples and aggregating the data across individuals or situations. Thus, they are able to understand how events, actions, and meanings are shaped by the unique circumstances in which these occur" (18-19). Miles and Huberman similarly state that "much recent research supports a claim that...field research is far better than solely quantified approaches at developing explanations of what we call local causality – the

actual events and processes that led to specific outcomes" (*A Sourcebook of New Methods* 132). This is the goal of my study: to look at how the principal's decisions made in the first year of operation affected the developing culture of the school.

Bolster argues that a qualitative approach should "emphasize the perspective of [administrators and] teachers and the understanding of particular settings" and that this has "far more potential in informing educational practitioners" (in Maxwell 21). As one of my goals is to help future principals (myself included) to learn from the experiences of others in aiding in the development of a new school culture, the qualitative approach I have chosen to take is advantageous. As well, Scriven argues that qualitative research is particularly helpful in "conducting formative evaluations, ones that are intended to help improve existing practice rather than to simply assess the value of the program or product being evaluated" (in Maxwell 21).

It would be virtually impossible to do the kind of indepth study necessary to capture the culture of a school using quantitative research methods. The sheer magnitude of information needed from each school studied would be daunting to compile (as to do a quantitative study, numerous schools would need to be chosen). As well, it would be difficult to find numerous schools to compare as not many new schools open in the province each year. Questionnaires measuring responses about school culture may or may not produce useful data. For example, knowing that eighty percent of teachers in a school feel the principal has positively contributed to the culture of the school does not tell us anything about how he/she has accomplished this. Qualitative research focuses on

"specific situations or people, and its emphasis is on words rather than numbers" (Maxwell 17), and thus is a more appropriate method of research for this study as a more indepth interview approach is needed, where interviewees can be asked about what they see as the principal's role in culture development.

Since culture is an ever-changing phenomenon, changes would be difficult to capture in a quantitative study. A qualitative study is better able to outline any changes in tone or atmosphere that have occurred over the first three years of operation at each school. For example, in order to understand why the principals involved in the study made the decisions they did in the opening year, one must interview the principals and question their motivations and intentions. According to Maxwell, "in a qualitative study, you are interested not only in the physical event and behavior that is taking place, but also in how the participants in your study make sense of this and how their understandings influence their behavior" (17).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In conducting this study, three research methods were used: indepth, open-ended interviews, limited observations, and document collection. The indepth interviews provided the primary method of data gathering. I chose to use interviews as a method as "we interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe...We cannot observe feelings, thought, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer.

We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things" (Patton 196)[4]. As the processes I am studying began three years ago, it is not possible to observe the initiating decisions and actions. It is necessary therefore to interview in order to identify the principals' behaviors, intentions, and motivations during the initial stages of developing school culture. Interviewing, along with careful observation, is also a primary method of the field researcher in qualitative studies (Van Maanen).

Site and Participant Selection

I chose to conduct the study at two new secondary schools in the district in which I teach - one where I have a teaching position, and one where a close colleague is teaching. These particular schools were chosen for a numerous reasons. First, they both opened in the same year, were given the same funding, and are identical in building design. These similarities are important since they eliminate funding, age and structure as possible differences in culture development.

Secondly, since both schools are the new design for all future secondary schools in this district (in other words, they are a blueprint), the study results are more applicable to other principals in the district who open new schools. Thirdly, I had a good working relationship with both principals as I have worked for both (one currently and one while student teaching ten years ago), so they were more willing to participate in my study. Maxwell points out the importance of having a

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[4] In Merriam 72.

relationship "that enables you to ethically learn the things you need to learn in order to validly answer your research questions" (66). My prior relationship with each principal aided in this process, although I had to keep in mind Seidman's caution that it is possible to have too much rapport (73-75). This wasn't a concern, as my relationship with each principal is a working relationship. However, throughout my study I have been aware of the problem of reflexivity, as defined by Hammersley and Atkinson as the recognition that the researcher is part of the phenomena studied and that "once we abandon the idea that the social character of research can be standardized out or avoided by becoming a 'fly on the wall' or a 'full participant' the role of the researcher as active participant in the research process becomes clear" (18). I also had easy access to both schools, as they are both within the district where I live and teach and both schools are relatively close together. All of these factors were important for logistical reasons.

In any research, there is always the concern of researcher bias, and as a participant observer, this was an area of obvious concern. However, in the words of C. Wright Mills "the most admirable scholars with the scholarly community...do not split their work from their lives...They want to use each for the enrichment of the other" (195). Maxwell also states that "separating your research from other aspects of your life cuts you off from a major source of insights, hypotheses, and validity checks" (28). Crompton and Jones similarly argue "you should utilize (or cultivate) any informal contacts within the organization that may help to promote your credibility" (70). As I have already done this over the past three years, having had insider access to each school enabled me to use this added

advantage in my research. However, caution was necessary in my use of insider information to draw conclusions. As Reason argues, I should not allow myself to be swept away and overwhelmed by my subjectivity, but rather raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process (12).

Although there were many similarities between the physical sites, there were differences in population make-up, staffing, and allocation of resources at each school. Each of these areas provided data (in the form of school population statistics, staffing procedures and school budgets) as to differences in the development of culture. Each school has a very distinct culture from the other, and the two principals have made various decisions in these areas that have had an effect on the culture of each school. This study focuses on the similarities and differences in their decisions and the outcomes of these decisions.

I chose to focus on staff views and the two principals' views instead of on students' views, as getting a clear picture of the school culture from students would make this project too large in scope and unwieldy for the purpose of this study. There are many variables that affect student responses, such as who a student's friends are, how involved they are in school activities, their reasons for attending this particular school, their views towards school in general, et cetera. These will all have a significant effect on how students view the school. Thus, interviewing students would have added a number of further variables to my study, making the size unmanageable for a Master's thesis. Therefore, focus centered on what things each principal did similarly, and whether the outcomes were similar, from their own perspective and that of staff, as well as looking at what things they did differently, the outcomes, and why these particular outcomes

occurred. In addition to discovering the positive effects, I hoped to discover what types of decisions and actions did not work for each principal and their thoughts as to why these decisions didn't work.

As mentioned above, the principals were selected due to willingness to participate in the study, my prior relationship with each of them, and of course, by the fact that each are principals of the sister schools on which I had chosen to focus. Choosing the teachers to interview was a more difficult task, as I wanted to collect a greater depth of information about the culture of each school without having to interview every single staff member. Therefore, careful consideration was given to whom I chose to "sample"[5] from each school. Miles and Huberman point out that "if you are talking with one kind of informant, you need to consider why this kind of informant is important, and, from there, which other people should be interviewed. This is a good bias-controlled exercise" (*A Sourcebook of New Methods* 41). As I was conducting a qualitative study, criterion-based selection[6] was chosen (LeCompte & Preissle 69). I selected two teachers who have been on staff since the school opened (from here on, these teachers will be referred to as founding teachers) and one teacher who is a new staff member (from here on, this teachers will be referred to as new staff member). Founding teachers were selected because they have been there since the school opened

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[5] "Whenever you have a choice as to ... who to talk to, or what information sources to focus on, you are faced with a sampling decision" (Maxwell 69).

[6] Criterion based selection is a strategy where particular people are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be gathered as well from other sources. Three goals of this type of sampling are: to achieve representativeness or typicality of individuals, to adequately capture the heterogeneity in the population to ensure that the conclusions adequately represent the entire range of variation, and to establish particular comparisons to illuminate the reasons for differences between settings or individuals (in Maxwell 70-2).

and have seen and participated in the development of each school's culture. Interviewing a new staff member hopefully allowed me a glimpse of the espoused values of the school. Schein points out that new members to a staff are often unaware at first of the underlying assumptions that surround the culture of an organization. It was interesting to see if this was true.

In order to capture a well-rounded view of the school culture, it was extremely important that teachers who would be representative of the entire school staff, as much as this was possible were chosen. In order to do this, several factors were considered when selecting my subjects. I wanted a sample that would reach different areas of the school, so each teacher who participated was from a different department and several different areas in each school were covered. At first, I considered interviewing parallel teachers at each school, for example two science teachers, two physical education teachers and two social studies teachers. However, this was not sensible, as some teachers were not willing to participate due to other time commitments. As well, I hoped for a sample that showed both experience and youth, as both tend to see culture differently. Finally, gender bias was a concern, so it was necessary to ensure that a roughly equal number of male and female teachers were interviewed. And finally, an ethical concern arose when selecting interviewees from my own school; I did not want to choose anybody whom I had influence over as department head, thus eliminating all members of my own department.

In choosing each subject, careful consideration was given to the roles they play in their respective schools. Having an "insider" view into each staff aided in the selection process. At my own school, this was quite easy, as I have been at

the school since its opening and know all of the staff members quite well. Teachers who were quite involved in several aspects of school life, both in the classroom and out, were chosen as these teachers might have a more rounded view of the school culture. I also tried to choose teachers whose viewpoints were unfamiliar, as I did not want to bias my study results by choosing teachers whose vision of the school coincided with my own. After talking with several teachers on staff about what my study entailed and asking for suggestions as to whom would be a good person to interview, I also asked the principal to recommend teachers. A similar process was followed at the other school, except the same access to insider information was not present. I asked the advice of a close colleague who teaches there, as well as talking with staff members at a staff social and, once again, asking the principal for recommendations. After gathering these recommendations, I discussed how to go about selecting participants with a group of Masters students with whom I was taking a research methodology course. With their help and the guidance of my thesis advisor, three teachers from each school were selected. Therefore, the subjects of the study are comprised of the principal, two founding teachers, and one new teacher at each school.

Once teachers were selected, I contacted teachers individually and explained the purposes of my study and what role they would play if they were willing to participate. I was pleasantly surprised when most of the teachers approached responded enthusiastically (one teacher was unable to participate as he was on a leave of absence for portions of the time during which the study took place). I was now ready to commence interviewing.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

As discussed above, qualitative methods were chosen for this study as they are the most suitable for studying the ever-changing cultures of these two schools[7]. I used a semi-structured design as "structured approaches can help to ensure the comparability of data across sources…and are thus particularly useful in answering variance questions, questions that deal with differences between things and their explanation" (Maxwell 64). Miles and Huberman point out that pre-structuring helps to reduce the volume of data and functions as a form of pre-analysis that simplifies later analytic work (*An Expanded Sourcebook* 17). Thus, interview guides were prepared beforehand. Interviews with the principals and members of staff were the primary methods of data collection. Crompton and Jones argue that "you cannot begin to develop insights into the way the organization functions until you have grasped that it is viewed differently by different interest groups" (69). As well, observation of the school atmosphere and of formal and informal staff gatherings and documents such as school mission and vision statements were examined.

Interviewing

In composing the interview guides, the type of information I wanted to elicit was carefully considered. In order to follow Schein's functionalist approach to culture, and breaking the study down into artifacts, espoused values, and

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[7] Reasons for choosing a qualitative study have been outlined in the introduction, so I have not repeated them here.

underlining assumptions, I needed to ask questions that would solicit this information. Of course, the first two categories, artifacts and espoused values are a little easier to unearth than the third.

My questions were grouped into two sets, the first considerably longer than the second (see Appendix B for interview guides). The first set included questions regarding background information about where interviewees had taught previously and their reasons for the move to their present school. These questions were designed to provide a frame of reference for the rest of the interview questions, as teachers' previous experiences with school culture and their reasons for coming to the school provide insight into their mindset in talking about the culture of their present school. For example, if teachers previously taught at schools known for their collegiality, then that will influence their views of their new school, as they will come with certain expectations for staff. Or if teachers chose to come to the school, as opposed to being force transferred, this may also influence how they feel about the school (especially if they were angry about having to leave their previous schools). These first questions also served to make interviewees more comfortable.

From there, questions dealt more specifically with the school artifacts. My plan was to introduce the topic of culture and get the interviewee thinking about different areas of the school's culture. In the second interview, focus centered on espoused values and staff interactions. My hope was that by leaving these questions until the second interview, this would give the interviewees more time to consider different aspects of the school's culture which were brought to their attention in the first interview. Also, depending on the interviewee's experiences

at his/her school, some of these questions had the potential to create more negative responses. These questions concluded the interview, so they did not colour the whole interview. The questions asked of the two administrators varied slightly from the questions asked of the teachers, as their differing positions in the school meant their access to information was different. For example, the principals were asked about hiring procedures, whereas the teachers were asked about interview questions.

Schein defines artifacts as the "constructed physical and social environment. At this level one can look at physical space, the technological output of the group, its written and spoken language, artistic productions, and overt behavior of its members" (1st Ed. 14). Three areas Schein recommends gathering information about when interviewing are organizational structure, an organization's formal information and control system, and myths, legends, stories and charters (121-24). I chose to focus my questions on the first and third areas, as the second area is very similar from school to school as much of this is controlled at the district level. Thus in framing my questions, I tried to ask questions that would elicit information about the school layout, logo, any mottos or slogans, and resource allocation.

As noted earlier, Schein defines espoused values as strategies, goals and philosophies (2nd Ed. 17) that have developed as the staff have faced problems of internal integration and external adaptation. At the first interview, I only asked a couple of questions that would elicit espoused values, questions regarding the atmosphere of the school and the participant's role in contributing to school culture. The second interview focused more on this area of culture with

questions regarding student, parent, staff, and administrator values, as well as questions about professional development, since this often shows what a school values as it is what staff have decided to focus on professionally. The question from the first interview soliciting a description of the school culture was also repeated. This was done to see if there was a difference in response once participants had had the interval between the two interviews to ponder their school's culture. With the final interview question, which asked the advice would they give a new member of staff, I hoped to glimpse the underlying assumptions of the staff. My hope was that this would tell me what values the staff truly felt were important. For the second interview, once again, the questions asked of the teachers and administrators were slightly different due to their differing positions in the school. For example, teachers were asked about advice they would give a new staff member, while administrators were asked about how they hoped Teachers On Call experienced and viewed their school culture and the types of things they did to insure this happened. The new teacher was asked about his/her opinions on the culture of the school as an outsider coming in, thus providing the perspective of someone less immersed in the school's culture.

The two principals were interviewed twice with the goal of not exceeding an hour in interview length. However, the first interview in each case reached almost two hours in duration, and the second was about forty-five minutes. At my school, these interviews were conducted during the school day during my preparation block and at the other school after school, as these were the times most convenient to each principal. The first set of interviews took place early in second semester and the second set, near the end of the semester. By

interviewing at the beginning of the semester and the end, this not only gave

each principal time to consider what they do that affects the school culture (they

were probably be more conscious of this after the first interview), but it also

provided a more balanced look at the school culture, as often a school's culture

adjusts with the various seasons.

In addition to interviewing the principals, I interviewed three staff members

at each school: two founding teachers and one teacher new to the school this

year. The interviews lasted from thirty minutes to an hour in duration. Once again,

these interviews were conducted after school, at a time and location convenient

to the subject. I interviewed each teacher twice, once at the beginning of the

semester and once near the end. With the teachers, however, I conducted my

final interview in May, as June is often a very hectic month for secondary

teachers, which would have made scheduling interviews more difficult.

All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, with the permission of the

interviewee. The transcript was provided to them within a few of weeks of the

interviews, so they could peruse it at their leisure and bring forth any comments

or concerns.

Observations

Observations of different common areas of the school (e.g. cafeteria,

library, gym, staff room) allowed me to record the material and social aspects of

school culture. Participant observation is an important part of my research.

According to Crompton and Jones, "you have to regard all the time you spend

inside the organization as a part of the research...Organizational culture will demonstrate itself in all kinds of ways and places...[This] will require that you are observing constantly" (71). My observations in these areas focused on what artifacts of the culture were visible in these places, such as school colours, logos, mottos, slogans, or aesthetics. Originally, I had planned to observe a number of staff gatherings, such as staff meetings and social functions, but this was limited due to time constraints, and my inability to attend functions at the one school as they were often scheduled at the same time as functions at my school, at which my attendance was mandatory as a member of staff. As I was not able to provide consistent observational data from each school, this aspect of my study was limited.

Documents

Examining school vision and mission statements have outlined the values that the staff and principal have actually "put in writing". A school vision statement is a statement of the school's hopes for staff, students and the community. A mission statement is a briefer statement of the overall goals of the school, often having to do with fostering lifelong learning in individuals. These statements can reveal a great deal about what is important to the school (e.g., athletics, academics, character development).

CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

This study commenced in April after I received ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Research Ethics Board (See Appendix A). Once interviewee selection was complete, each interviewee was sent an e-mail outlining the contents of my study as well as what their participation would involve. Each was also offered a copy of my research proposal, although none accepted this offer. I then forwarded a copy of the *Informed Consent by Participants in a Research Project or Experiment* to them (see Appendix B), and asked them to read it, sign it, and bring it to our first interview, along with any questions or concerns about their participation they may have had. At the beginning of the first interview, the confidentiality clause was once again explained and interviewees were assured that their names would not appear anywhere in the study, and to the best of my ability, I would keep their participation confidential from other interviewees. The decision was left with them whether or not to tell others about their participation. As well, I explained that if they didn't want to answer a particular question, or wanted to withdraw from the study altogether, they could do so at any time with no consequence. I tried to make my interviewees feel as comfortable about their participation as possible.

Each interview was taped with the permission of the interviewee, and once each interview was complete, the interviewee was provided with a copy of the interview transcript to peruse and comment on. Before the second interview, I sent an informal e-mail to each participant, reminding each of the confidentiality

clause, as well as asking for feedback and setting up times for second interviews (see Appendix D). At the beginning of the second interview, concerns or comments arising from the first interview were dealt with. We then proceeded with the second interview. Again, interviewees were provided with an interview transcript and asked for written feedback. With both transcripts, interviewees were given the opportunity to change, add to, or omit any statements of concern. At the conclusion of their part in the study, I sent an e-mail thanking participants for their time and input, as well as providing contact numbers where they could reach me, if they had questions or concerns, or wanted to review my research at any time (see Appendix D).

VALIDITY CONCERNS

The most serious validity threat to my study would be that the principal has no influence over developing the culture of a school and, in fact, there is an alternate explanation such as the culture is formed by the students and teacher and administrative responses to students. This is a very real possibility, although I do believe that there are things an administrator can do to influence culture. If there were not, there would be no point in sending a "trouble shooter" into a difficult school to try to improve the situation. Even popular culture has based movies on the principle that an administrator can have a significant influence on the tone or culture of the school (the film *Lean on Me* is an excellent representative example). There is also a considerable amount of theoretical research (discussed in Chapter Two above), which shows how leaders can and

do influence culture. Of course the term "leader" does not solely refer to the principal in a school, but in most cases the principal is a key actor. The teachers I interviewed who have played an active role in the school have also had an effect on shaping the culture of the school.

Another serious threat to the validity of my research stemmed from the interview process. When interviewing, there is always the danger that in describing what one has heard, one may not have been accurate or one's data is incomplete (Maxwell 89). This problem was avoided by audio taping all of my interviews. As well, I transcribed my interview notes immediately following each interview, so that the experience was "fresh" in my mind to capture the most data. Interviewees also reviewed their transcripts to ensure the data were correct.

Another problem that can arise from interviewing is sampling. I carefully selected which teachers to interview so that the data I collected were not influenced by a teacher with secondary motives (either positive or negative). For example, a teacher who is unhappy with the current principal and is looking for an avenue to voice his/her complaints would taint the validity of my research. On the other hand, a teacher who is a long time friend of the principal, or who is looking to advance his/her career, and thus is unwilling to look critically at the principal's role in developing culture, would also taint the validity of my research. A second interviewing concern stemmed from the fact that I am in a leadership position (department head) in one of the two schools to be studied thereby making reactivity[8] a consideration. I was careful that my position on staff did not

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[8] According to Maxwell, reactivity is the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied (91).

influence the answers to interview questions. One way this was avoided was by ensuring that no one from my own department was an interviewee. Secondly, my questions were phrased in such a way that they reduced bias to the highest degree possible. I tried to be aware of my facial reactions as well, as my face is very expressive and my expression could potentially influence an answer. When there was nothing that could be done to reduce my impact (e.g., I couldn't stop being department head), I simply remained aware of the ways in which I could be influencing the answers. Leading questions (questions designed to invoke a particular response) were also avoided.

As well, choosing to only interview a few teachers as opposed to the whole staff may have affected the validity of my study. However, in qualitative research, one tends to focus on a few key individuals as opposed to many. This allows the researcher to conduct a more in depth study of the people being studied and obtain richer data. As well, research has shown that "the generalizability of qualitative studies usually is based, not on explicit sampling of some defined population to which the results can be extended, but on the development of a theory that can be extended to other cases" (Becker, in Maxwell 97). By looking at the principal's role in developing culture in two new secondary schools, hopefully some patterns have become apparent that can then be used by other principals who are opening new schools.

Dexter also cautions that only using interviews as a source of data makes it difficult to conduct a thorough and valid study (17). Therefore, triangulation[9]

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[9] According to Denzin, triangulation is collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods (in Maxwell 75).

was used to obtain more valid data - not only triangulation of sources, by interviewing three teachers from each school, but also triangulation of information collection, by gathering information from interviews, documents, and observations. According to Maxwell, using multiple sources and methods gives one's conclusions more credibility than being limited to one source or method (76).

A fourth threat to the validity of my data is that the principals may have wanted to influence the results so they look favorably on their schools. This means they may not have always been entirely truthful about things they did (they may have taken credit for the ideas/actions of other staff members) or they may have only been willing to present data on positive effects on culture, not negative ones. As each of these principals has principaled other schools, I also asked their opinions on what types of things tend to influence cultures in other schools, using comparison to obtain a clearer view of how they see culture. Even through comparing the two schools, I have been able to draw some conclusions about influences on culture (Miles & Huberman, *A Sourcebook of New Methods* 237).

Finally, there was always the danger that I may misinterpret something I heard in an interview or saw at one of the two schools. Maxwell cautions that "the main threat to valid interpretation is imposing one's own framework or meaning, rather than understanding the perspective of the people studied and the meanings they attach to their words and actions" (89-90). Thus, attempts were made to be aware of my own biases (Hammersley and Atkinson call this reflexivity) and possible areas of concern were outlined throughout the text.

Maxwell also states that interviewing gives you "a description of what informants said, not a direct understanding of their perspective. Generating an interpretation of someone's perspective is inherently a matter of inference from descriptions of his or her behavior (including verbal behavior), whether the data are derived from observations, interviews, or some other source such as written documents" (76). The easiest way to avoid misinterpretation was to do member checks; I have asked those I have interviewed to review my conclusions for accuracy (Maxwell 94). Once my research was compiled, other colleagues at each school were asked to read it and offer their opinions on what aspects of culture are being influenced by the principals. This type of feedback has allowed me to see other perspectives and will hopefully point out any discrepancies in my theory.

ETHICAL ISSUES

One area of concern arose from the fact that I teach at one of the schools I have studied and a close colleague teaches at the other. As mentioned previously, this gave me access to insider information that I might not otherwise have had. I have been aware of this fact constantly and have been careful that what I included in my study was not information that could harm others. As well, participant observation methodology views this as an advantage to producing more valid research, and therefore this was an appropriate advantage consistent to the chosen research methods.

Another area of ethical concern was that interviewees needed to be assured that their responses would remain confidential, as some may have been

concerned if they viewed one of the principal's actions as negative. Of course, maintaining anonymity was difficult, and I assured teachers that even if the principal knew whom I was interviewing, he would not know which data came from which source. As the principal is not a member of the teacher's union, the union code of ethics does not apply, but nonetheless, I needed to be careful in presenting negative information.

At all times, the participants had access to the research findings in order to verify information and satisfy curiosity. Teacher sources remained confidential unless written consent was given to share their identity. Many of the teachers participating in the study chose to inform their principals themselves that they were participating.

Before conducting any observations in the two schools, permission was obtained from the appropriate principal and staff. As students were not directly involved in my study, it was not necessary to attain parent permission for observations. As well, I did not video-tape any observations or take pictures which had students in them.

Chapter Four

Analysis of Results

SCHOOL AND PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The two schools chosen for this study opened four years ago, and are identical in structure and funding. Each school is a two-storey, steel and concrete structure, with numerous windows and skylights to allow for a lot of natural lighting. Both schools are grey and black, with primary colours highlighting railings and floors, and natural wood paneling providing a contrast. The schools are fairly rectangular in layout, as each has one main hallway running from one end of the school to the other, with only two small perpendicular hallways, leading to the technology/art wings and physical education wings, respectively. At the center of each school is an open area, two stories high, where students can congregate for lunch, school dances, or spare blocks. This area has garage doors at the rear that can be opened to create a larger space or to allow in fresh air. The front doors of each school open to the office on one

side, and the library on the other. The staff room is located at the far end of the school. The schools were built for a student base of 1000.

School A was opened due to the overcrowding of two nearby secondary schools. Parents in the area lobbied the district to build a school in their area to help ease some of this overcrowding and provide a school in closer proximity to their residences. The only other secondary school in the area is a well-established and highly regarded private school. The area in which the school is situated is upper middle class, and many of the people who live there own their own businesses. The area is primarily residential, with no industry and very few stores and restaurants. There is a high Asian population, mainly originating from Taiwan and Korea. Approximately 35% of the students attending this school are ESL or have been ESL at some point during their schooling.

School B was opened due to the overcrowding of one secondary school and a boom in housing developments in the area. It is located very close to the district border and there are no other secondary schools (other than the one it split from) in the immediate area. The school is situated in a rural setting and is surrounded by farms on three sides. However, this farmland is slated for future housing development. There is a large industrial area and shopping complex relatively close to the school. Many of the students come from middle class backgrounds, but there is also a small, poorer, more transient element to the population. However, with the new housing developments, transience is decreasing. The school is predominantly Caucasian, with very few ESL students.

The principal of School A is one year from retirement. He began working in the district as an academic teacher and moved on to become a counselor, then

a vice principal and finally a principal. He has been a principal for approximately twenty years and has prior experience opening a newly renovated school. Founding teacher one at School A has been teaching for more than thirty years. He teaches both juniors and seniors in an academic area. He moved to the school because he wanted to be part of something new before he retired. Founding teacher two has been teaching for approximately eight years. Prior to coming to the school, he taught juniors at an inner city school. He teaches both junior and seniors in an elective area. He moved to the school because he is interested in administration and wanted new leadership opportunities that were not available at his previous school. The new teacher at this school has been teaching for approximately six years. Previously she taught at an inner city school. She teaches both juniors and seniors in an academic area and she moved to the school because she had heard really good things about it from colleagues.

The principal of School B is also nearing the end of his career, as he is about four years from retirement. He began working in the district as a teacher in an elective area, and then became a vice principal and then principal. He has been a principal for approximately ten years and has prior experience as a vice principal at a newly opened school. Founding teacher one at School B has been teaching for approximately thirty years. He teaches both juniors and seniors in an elective area as well as runs a special program unique to his school. He moved to the school because changes were occurring to his position at his previous school, and because he wanted the opportunity to work with the latest in new technology. Founding teacher two at has been teaching for approximately

fourteen years and she teaches both juniors and seniors in an academic area. She came to the school because she was coming back from a leave and saw it as a good time for a change. The new teacher at this school has been teaching for three years. She teaches in a non-academic area and was force transferred to the school (this means she was placed in a position, not hired by the principal).

PROCESS OF ANALYSIS

Once I finished gathering my data, the daunting task of analyzing my findings began. The analysis was a somewhat continuous process throughout the study instead of taking place entirely at the end, as throughout my study I wrote memos and took field notes during and after each interview and observation. The purpose of writing memos was to "capture [my] analytic thinking about [my] data, [to] facilitate ... thinking [and] stimulating analytic insights" (Maxwell 78). As well, I transcribed interviews quickly after conducting them so as to keep the data fresh in my mind.

According to Maxwell, "the initial step in qualitative analysis is reading the interview transcripts, observational notes, or documents that are to be analyzed" (78). During this process I wrote notes and memos on what I saw or heard in my data and developed tentative ideas about categories and relationships (Maxwell 78). I have used Schein's three levels of culture as a primary method of categorizing (or coding[10]): artifacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions. In fact, as my questions were designed with this in mind, some of

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[10] Coding: to fracture the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate the comparison of data within and between these categories – sorting data into broader themes and issues (Maxwell 78).

my coding was done through the questions I chose to ask. I then divided each of the three categories into subcategories as I reviewed my observation field notes, and my interview transcriptions and field notes, labeling references to school artifacts, such as slogans, mottos, building layout, and resource allocation. To discover the espoused values of participants, I examined references to professional development, treatment of teachers on call, advice to new staff members, as well as the school mission and vision statements. Finally, I looked for indications of the underlying assumptions of the staff and principal at each school. These were more difficult to unearth, since underlying assumptions are suggested by what staff members do and say; they are not spoken outright. All of this categorizing was done immediately following observations and interviews. In addition to categorizing for Schein's three levels of culture, I looked for patterns and themes appearing in the interviews and observations. One of the themes that became apparent was the role of celebration in creating culture. As themes became apparent, I needed to keep in mind the advice of Coffey and Atkinson: "codes are organizing principles that are not set in stone. They are our own creations, in that we identify and select them ourselves...They can be expanded, changed, or scrapped altogether as our ideas develop through repeated interactions with the data" (32). As well, several interviewees brought up the role played by the external environment in shaping culture.

Once all material was coded, I used Microsoft Word to create charts of similar thematic material. After I grouped material thematically, I paired up principal responses with staff responses to look for similarities and incongruities.

In this pairing, I have been able to see how the principal's intended effects on culture are perceived by staff. As well, similarities and differences in views of the school culture have become apparent. Interviewing more than one staff member at each school has helped to achieve triangulation, thus validifying the data.

After all the data were coded and the themes analyzed, the difficult task of answering my research question began. I looked for patterns indicating what each principal did to effectively influence the culture at his school. To do this I needed to include both principal and staff perceptions in my findings. Throughout this entire process, I reviewed the data with the people involved in the study, thus gaining their insights into themes and patterns. As well, all material was discussed on a weekly basis with my thesis advisor and fellow Master's students.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

History

One of the first areas Schein suggests examining when observing the culture of a place is its history. He recommends questioning interviewees regarding when the organization was founded and the events that occurred at that time *(1st Edition* 119). Of course, in studying two new schools, the history was being formed as the schools developed. Therefore, when the schools first opened, they had no history, other than the reasons they were opened, and the places staff and students were coming from. As mentioned above in the profile section, each school was opened due to overcrowding. At School A, students were joining together from two nearby high schools to form the new school,

whereas at School B, one high school was being divided in half. Staff members were coming from schools throughout the district for various reasons to form a new staff. Part of the reason for examining the history of a place is to discover the critical incident that helped to form its culture. According to Schein, a critical incident is "any major event that threatened survival, or caused reexamination or reformulation of goals or ways of working, or involved membership or inclusion issues" (1st Edition 120). Schein recommends that the best way to discover the critical incident is to question events that caused problems, were challenging or caused tension (120).

Due to the differences in the formation of each school, each faced different tensions. Both schools encountered tensions resulting from bringing teachers together from different places in the district. The principal from School A commented that merging staffs is "really difficult because they're…coming from a culture, and they're probably harder to deal with than the kids." Of course, all teachers come with a set of expectations and beliefs formed at their previous school. Working together to form a new set of common expectations, goals, and values was a challenge that faced both schools. The principal of School A faced this tension by adopting the philosophy that "we want to bring the best from all the other schools. If you've got something that you think is best practice or is a really neat experience, then let's bring it here and let's make it work in our setting." Comments like "when I was at [another school], we did this" were accepted and the approach adopted was to take the amalgamation of ideas from staff and work together to adapt those ideas to the new school setting. The principal of School A felt "trying to get the staff to come together and turning it

over to them to make decisions about classrooms" was a good way to start this process. As well, meetings for new staff were held at various locations prior to the school opening to "talk about things" such as "how would this work." According to him, getting staff involved in the decision-making process (e.g., regarding classrooms) would help to resolve the tensions caused by having to adapt to a new set of circumstances.

The amalgamation of students at School A presented a very different challenge than that faced by School B. According to one of the founding teachers at School A, the students were "sullen" in the first year, as they didn't like having to leave behind friends, teachers, and known ways of doing things. He claimed "we had some very unhappy kids the first couple years." One of the things the principal did to try to alleviate this problem was to "create a culture where the kids would want to be [there]." In order to do this, he tried to "downplay...the conflict...[by getting] them [the kids] to work together." One method was "setting up the student council in a way that would bridge both schools." A second potential tension at this school arose from the need to integrate the large ESL population. The principal was concerned that "some schools start off with this conflict between, you know, the Asians have their hallway and that sort of thing...I wanted to work on that because I've seen it happen at other schools. I guess I was determined not to have that kind of thing happening in the school. Because once it starts, that's the culture of your school forever." This tension was alleviated by having staff create opportunities in the classroom to have students from different cultures work together in groups giving students opportunities to integrate. As well, the language issue arising from

students wanting to speak their mother tongue instead of English was dealt with very gently. According to the principal, students were not given "the hard line" of speak only English but were told "as appropriate, use your own language." These two tensions were probably the critical incidents of internal integration faced by School A, and in adapting to and solving these problems, the staff and student cultures began to form.

School B had slightly different problems when it first opened. This school was not an amalgamation of two schools. Instead, an overcrowded school with numerous portables and an extended day to accommodate the over-crowding, was divided in half. Thus, the problems of joining two groups of students did not exist. In addition, students were coming from less than ideal conditions, so they were excited about attending the new school. In fact, the principal described the opening day when students "came running into the school because they had seen and heard so much about some of the things we were doing here and some of the uniquenesses of our high technology and the different approaches of what we were trying to do and the physical things from the…silk trees and the hub and the couches and…the T.V.'s in the hallways." So instead of being angry, students were excited to be at the new school. Furthermore, this school, unlike School A, did not have the added concern of integrating ESL students. However, this didn't mean there were no problems. According to founding teacher two, the main struggle was the students trying to establish themselves and test the teachers. The principal claimed "the relationship building the first year was a struggle, as…everybody was new." He surmised the main emotion of the students was frustration because they had to meet the different expectations of

their new school. "They wanted to have the same types of things they had at their old school." He described the process as "these 650 kids that first year came in here and they now had 35 TOC's (Teachers on Call). And you know what? Those TOC's were not going to go away. They were there every day...[the students] were testing every single teacher." He mentioned with a laugh that there were some very big power struggles in the first semester. The fact that he can now laugh about this process suggests that this issue has now been resolved. One way the principal dealt with this tension was by meeting with students early in the year and telling them, "we are going to treat you with respect, we are going to treat you as adults, we are going to try to work side-by-side with you so that you can have success here." He emphasized what he called a "non-confrontational" approach, which I took to mean discussing problems instead of engaging in conflict.

One of the main areas of frustration between staff and students arose from students' attitudes towards their academic performance. According to the principal, students were content with minimal achievement, but staff could see their potential to do better. Teachers were so frustrated by the end of semester one that they did not know what to do. The principal took two steps to try to resolve this issue. First, students were told "if you're going to be here you now have to raise the bar and you're going to be here every day, and you're going to be attending, you are not just working for a C, but you are going to strive for A's and B's." As well, he mailed a personal letter home informing staff that a discussion of this issue would occur at the next staff meeting. He described how they "dedicated the entire October staff meeting, an hour and a half and it went

over, it went two hours, about what [staff and administration] should be doing to work towards this...everybody had a chance to speak and vent their frustrations." According to the principal, this seemed to ease some of the tension experienced by staff and student performance increased and things started to go more smoothly. He credited this change to the relationship building that occurred between staff and students in the first semester. This reflects Schein's idea that through solving problems of internal integration, the culture of an organization evolves. In this case, the culture that was evolving seemed to be one of close relationships between staff and students and working together to solve problems.

Another problem faced by staff in the first semester was adapting to the new timetable with longer blocks. For teachers used to teaching traditional seventy-five minute classes, longer blocks meant changes in their teaching style as teachers now had to plan several activities for each block. According to the principal "all of [them] had to work in making the changes that would be needed. And if [they] didn't make that change...and a few honest teachers came back at the end of the first semester and said, 'I tried to keep the old way of teaching; it didn't work and I lost my kids'...now they had to change." This process of adaptation was difficult for some teachers who were 'chalk and talk' type teachers. Thus, although the two schools faced slightly different problems regarding student and staff integration, for each school, getting students on-line and staff adapting to new situations were most likely the critical incidents that helped determine the current culture of each school.

Artifacts

Artifacts are visible symbols of the culture of an organization. In this study, the artifacts examined included building layout, allocation of resources, logo, and mottos and slogans. Each of these artifacts suggests some of the espoused values and underlying assumptions of the participants.

Layout

According to each principal, he did not have much input into the overall design of the building, even though the principal from School A was on the district design committee. The principal from School B noted that they were only able to make some minor changes. They made suggestions about gym layout, staff room location, and weight room location, but final decisions were made by the district and the architects. Thus, much of the school layout reflects district values and underlying assumptions as opposed to those of the individual school. As well, the budget for each school was cut by approximately ten percent before the building was completed, which resulted in narrower hallways and other reductions. The principal from School A commented that in touring the building for the first time, visitors to the school really like the layout. He himself commented on positive features like the huge garage doors in the center area that create a more relaxing atmosphere, the theatre, the windows which allow for natural lighting, and the steps throughout the school which slow down the flow of traffic. He also commented on what he saw as design problems, such as the fact that all traffic must enter through the front doors of the school, eroding that area

of flooring. As well, his office was originally supposed to be the first one within the main doors of the larger office, but he felt it was in too busy a location, so he moved to the conference room (a large room tucked in a corner of the larger office). The principal of School B also made this change. This may indicate how they each see their role as principal as being more 'behind the scenes' as they are less visible to those in the office, and not quite as easily accessible to students and parents (there are two hallways meeting at their office that teachers have access to). Each principal also took over the largest office, perhaps indicating an authoritative leadership style meaning the person of highest rank in the school should have the largest office, or indicating a desire to have a large space in which to interact with staff and students since a larger office allows more room for chairs.

As the layout of each building is similar, many of the statements made by teachers from each school were also alike. Comments about the library being too small were made by five of the six teachers interviewed. Only one teacher, who taught in a subject area unlikely to use the library, felt the library was large enough. As well, five of the six teachers interviewed felt the staff room was located too far away from teaching space, leading to its underuse. The sixth teacher did not mention the staff room at all. Interestingly, the original school plan located the staff room in the middle of the school and the special programs (CELD, Bases, Alternate) where the present staff room is. However, a helping teacher at one of the School A principal's previous schools suggested that this "ghettoized" special needs students, so the staff room was moved to this location and the special programs rooms were moved to the center of the schools. From

their comments, it appears the teachers were not aware of this reasoning. Furthermore, this might not have been a good decision for staff congeniality. It seems to have discouraged interactions at lunch between teachers in different departments, as both staff rooms appear little used. The staff room location to some extent contradicts the value of staff cohesiveness and collegiality expressed by both principals. Comments about the centrally located office, the large gathering area in the center of the school for students, and the numerous windows throughout the school to allow in natural light were also common. As these aspects of the layout were determined at the district level, they point more to values held by the district such as creating a well-lit, open space for students and encouraging student interactions. The size of the library mentioned above also indicates a district focus on technology and I personally think shows a lack of value for traditional book knowledge, as the consensus seems to be that students can find everything they need to via computer research.

Two of the teachers at School A commented on the school setting and that the trees surrounding the school were "peaceful". As well at School A, the two founding teachers both opined that the teacher preparation space was not ideal. Both thought that segregating teachers into their departments reduced interactions between colleagues from different departments. This indicates a strong value for staff collegiality on the part of these two teachers. However, the principal of School A felt the "prep space works fairly well." And the principal of School B felt grouping by departments helped facilitate a culture of working together. The new teacher at School B had a similar view as she thought the departmental preparation space served to bring the departments together.

Although she did comment that it was often difficult to interact with other staff unless she went to visit their preparation space. This seems to indicate that departmental preparation space leads to collegiality between department members, but not to school-wide collegiality. One teacher from each school commented on the lack of storage space. The two founding teachers from School B both liked the rectangular structure of the school, because it allowed one to stand in the main hallway and see from one end of the school to the other. The new teacher from School B saw the school as a "clone school" and didn't appreciate the fact that all new schools in the district were going to have this design. However the principal of School B saw this as a positive reflection on the school, as it demonstrates that it is a good design.

Atmosphere

Even though the structure of each school is identical, according to the principal of School B, "what [they] did inside…rooms was totally independent to [themselves]." At School B, the principal felt the space allocation was very positive. Each department was given a group of classrooms. He describes this as "the building of departments in a unique way, where those people felt that this was their home base and everything moved around that." The principal felt this implied that "we're together here as a department and we're going to work together." This creates a family-like atmosphere, and his use of the words "home base" supports this. He also thought these groupings were good for students, as students always knew where they were in the school. School A also grouped according to department, but departments are located in different places in each

school. Neither principal made any comment as to why certain departments were given particular spaces. The principal of School B said his aim for the internal layout of the school was to create a "collegiate type campus." He felt the center open area was a good place to start so he arranged to have couches and artificial trees in big pots here. The couches provided a place for students to sit thereby demonstrating they were being respected as people by not having to sit on the floor as they do in most schools. He felt this was treating the students in a more adult-like fashion. As well, couches and plants are something one often finds in one's living space, thus again giving the school a more "homey" atmosphere. He put a lot of consideration into how to make the school an appealing place to be. After viewing schools in other districts to get ideas, he decided he wanted to "bring nature into the school," especially in the entranceway. He achieved this by having large murals painted that were visible from the front doors as well as placing numerous potted trees throughout the central area.

This desire to create an appealing environment was also applied in classrooms such as the learning center. The learning center often has a negative stigma attached to it by students because they believe that if they have to go there for help it means they are unintelligent. To avoid this stigma, the principal of School B wanted to ensure this was an appealing place. He wanted students to think upon entering, "Hey, this is a neat place. They've got computers, they've got chesterfields, they've got chess boards set up for games and [it's] a neat room." Teacher preparation rooms were also made appealing. "I wanted my prep rooms to be so that teachers, when they walked into a prep room, would see computers and shelving and pictures and motivational things and it would be

straightened…they would say this is a neat spot to be in. This is my home base. It's not just a little square box and I just have to sit here and work by myself, or work for other people and not feel good about it." It is obvious this principal put a great deal of thought into creating an atmosphere for staff and students that he felt would make the school a more inviting place to be. Creating a warm, "homey", hospitable environment was important to this principal, demonstrating relationship building and collegial values as this is more likely to occur in this kind of atmosphere. And from the comments made by teachers at School B about the atmosphere of the school, it is safe to conclude that he succeeded.

Even though there were similar comments from teachers at each school about the school structure, the comments about the atmosphere it created were quite different. Often when teachers are asked to describe the culture of a place, what they actually describe is the climate. This was true of most of the teachers interviewed; therefore much of the research in this section is taken from their responses to the interview question regarding school culture. Two of the teachers at School B described their school as a very warm place. The new teacher claimed it was an easy school to be placed at because it was so welcoming. This was exactly what the principal of this school envisioned. None of the teachers at School A described the atmosphere of their school as warm or welcoming. In fact, founding teacher two from School A feels that his school is sterile and boring. His main complaint was directed at the lack of signage in the school, as it is unwelcoming to have visitors wander around to find different areas. He feels the structure of the school does not allow for much decoration, since one can't push pins into or tape things to the concrete construction.

At School A, founding teacher one talked about events that occurred in the first year, such as staff socials, that provided different opportunities to get to know each other. He described the atmosphere at the school as very relaxed, as staff didn't have to sign in and there wasn't much pressure from administrators. He observed that some new staff to the school (staff hired after the first year) have not "fit in" as well with the old staff. He feels that the students are "good kids" who get along well with each other, and that considering B.C.'s multicultural population, there isn't a lot of racism. He feels that academic education is stressed. Founding teacher two described the culture of the school quite differently. Although he discussed the academic tone, he said there was pressure exerted through high parent expectations and that the academic focus overshadowed everything else. He described the school atmosphere as being very bland and lacking in balance, and that there were no outlets for staff or students. He claimed staff did not really participate in extra-curricular activities, using the "starving" school athletics program as an illustration. He also criticized the lack of celebration for accomplishments. He used an efficiently running engine or machine metaphor to describe the school; however, he emphasized that he liked being at the school and had no plans to change schools.

The new teacher saw the school culture in yet a different light. She felt it was an extremely happy staff and that teachers wanted to be there. To her, the school had a positive atmosphere, but at the same time was a very busy and productive place. She commented on the strong staff connections and the strong connections between staff and students. Like the other two teachers from this school, she had observed the academic focus and mentioned that she spent

most lunch hours "buried in her room" helping students and noticed that many teachers did this. She also said she spent most of her time with her own department. This is similar to the belief that other participants voiced that department preparation rooms create staff segregation. The atmosphere of School A appears to be very different to that of School B. Instead of a "homey" atmosphere, it has a very studious and serious atmosphere as indicated by participant references to an academic tone. It is interesting that the new teacher at this school sees the culture so differently. Perhaps this is due to her newness to the staff. Or perhaps it is a reflection of her reporting that she has not had many interactions outside of her classroom. This may indicate she has not been exposed to all aspects of the school's culture but has made assumptions based on the few interactions she has had. It would be interesting to interview this teacher again in her third or fourth year to see how her responses have changed.

At School B, all of the teachers described the school as having a very warm and welcoming atmosphere. Founding teacher one described it as having a "western" feel (students sometimes wear cowboy boots and hats to school). He stated that there were high academic expectations and that staff was very professional, and students were proud of their accomplishments. Founding teacher two also described these things, but not in such a positive light. Instead to her, it was a drive from staff and administration to accomplish a lot, and from students being very demanding, resulting in a tremendous workload and pressure to participate. She commented that these factors led to staff staying in their rooms to work at lunch, and that their busyness could lead to feelings of isolation or becoming overwhelmed. Although the new teacher described staff as friendly,

supportive, and approachable, she also observed that people don't eat in the lunchroom. As well, to her there was a lot of encouragement, especially for academic improvement, and she mentioned an awareness of provincial exam results. It seems at this school, there are pressures on academic staff to pull a high level of performance from students.

Both founding teachers at this school described the students as respectful. Even though all participants from School B described the school as having a "homey" atmosphere, they also recognized underlying pressures for students to succeed academically. It seems that while these pressures are overt at School A, they are somewhat masked by the comfortable atmosphere at School B. High academic achievement is a pressure exerted by the province and the district on all schools, and it seems the atmosphere of each school bears close relation to how much this pressure is felt and dwelt on by staff.

Resource Allocation

The ways in which resources are allocated at a school can tell a great deal about the values of the principal and of the staff. The principal of School A stated that "to make sure every teacher had what they needed to teach. So textbooks...things like the T.V.'s, the V.C.R.'s, the overheads, the white boards...one computer in each classroom" was the first priority. This indicates a high value placed on quality instruction and providing numerous learning opportunities for students. At School B, the principal identified technology as the highest priority. This technology took the form of a school wide telecommunications system, and computers, printers, T.V.s and V.C.R.s, and

overheads in every room. He wanted to make sure that teachers would have "those things [they] would need to use to complement their teaching strategies." He felt that if all these items were present, "there's no excuses from their point of view that I can't do some of the things that I wanted to do." This phrasing seemed a bit bizarre, as "there's no excuses" indicates that he feels teachers often give excuses for not doing their jobs. I don't know if this is what he intended to convey, or whether he was emphasizing that he wanted teachers to be able to teach in any way they saw fit. This principal felt the telecommunications system played a very important role in fostering school culture. From his experience at a previous school with a similar system, he recognized that students love technology and producing videos and T.V. programs. By having announcements broadcast over the T.V. system, he believed "kids are involved and now they know what's going on in the school." A common problem with announcements over the P.A. system is that students have become programmed to tune them out. At School B, they "program every T.V. in the building so it automatically comes on at a certain time, it automatically shuts off [at the end of] the announcements. Kids can create videos, teachers can create videos with kids to advertise and promote their events, their programs, whatever...the minute the T.V. comes on, thirty kids in the room are watching."

A second priority for the principal at School B was furnishings. He wanted to get quality furnishings that were "ape proof" (weren't going to be destroyed quickly). He "wanted to colour coordinate everything, so the tops match the carpet and then [they] did [theirs] in school colours." As mentioned above, this principal was very concerned with creating a welcoming and "homey" atmosphere

in the school, and colour coordinating is something usually done when decorating a home in Canada. He had murals painted on the walls and in the gym before the school opened as he wanted to display "strong visual images of who we are and where we were coming from and where we wanted to go." He also mentioned that staff had a huge input into resource allocation and that departments were asked to simply tell him what they wanted and he would get it. This puts him in a provider role, which was confirmed when one of the teachers described him as the patriarch of the school (the implications of this term will be discussed later). These priorities show that this principal values technology, aesthetics, staff participation in decision making, durability, and providing a variety of student learning experiences. He is also concerned with providing opportunities that will pique student interest, such as video production.

Upon reviewing the interview transcripts, I've noticed that teachers tended to answer this resource allocation question mainly in relation to their own departments, instead of for the school as a whole. Perhaps this was because they are most familiar with what their own departments received and may not be aware of what others received. As long as they were content, there would be little reason for investigation of and comparison with other departments. Interestingly, at School A, where the principal felt equipping classrooms was the highest priority, the two founding teachers felt that technology was. The new teacher also commented that each room was equipped with a computer. Equipping classrooms with whatever was needed to make teaching possible was seen as a secondary priority according to two of the three teachers interviewed. One of these teachers felt that the allocation of resources had been generous,

and that one received whatever one asked for within reason. Again this places the principal in the role of provider. One of the founding teachers felt that the school had been built with a science focus, as science rooms were spacious and extremely well equipped. He felt that his area did not receive the same number of resources in the form of bookshelves and window blinds, but that now, four years later, they were slowly catching up. This teacher also commented that not much money went into athletics. The new teacher also observed that more money had been spent in some areas than in others, feeling that academics were a priority, and that less was given to elective areas. Thus, according to the teachers, they also saw the principal as placing value on quality teaching and providing various learning opportunities for students; however, they also thought he valued technology and some academic areas, such as science, more than other areas, such as electives and humanities subjects. This may be a reflection of the high ESL population in this school, as these students tend to place a high value on the sciences and mathematics, and very little on the humanities.

At School B, similar comments were made about resource allocation. One teacher echoed the principal and felt technology was a priority, but this may have been because this is the area in which he works, so he had access to the school budget for technology, which was quite large. Two of the teachers felt that the funding was generous, and that equipping classrooms to teach was a priority. Founding teacher two felt that all departments were treated fairly and that textbooks were a priority. Founding teacher one observed that staff did not really have any say in the allocation of resources, and that there wasn't a committee formed that he knew about, as had been done at other schools, but that he hadn't

heard anyone complain about unfair treatment. This contradicts the principal's viewpoint that teachers had been involved in the resource allocation process. The new teacher was impressed by the number of teaching resources, such as videos, available to her. Thus, it seems at both schools that technology and equipping classrooms to teach were priorities demonstrating fundamental values.

School Logo

The school logo is the symbolic representation of the school. At School A, the logo is a mystical bird. This logo was created by talking with staff members from the principal's previous school to get suggestions. The suggestions were then put in a survey that was given to students who would be attending the new school. They were asked to choose the suggestion they liked best or add new ones of their own. The principal "wanted to have a logo that would take in what this meant…this area…you see a little bit water…the river. You see trees that are on the site, and ah, that whole thing in this area, the sun just seems to burst out." Ideas to incorporate all these concepts were discussed with a couple of parents who were instrumental in lobbying for the new school, but the idea for the logo finally came from a teacher who was interested in coming to the new school. It appears that students did not actually choose their logo. Although they did make suggestions for possibilities, none were taken. For the actual artwork, a private company was hired that had designed logos for other schools in the district. According to the principal, they "wanted to have a bit of a private look, that's why [they] came up with eventually that kind of crest was the academic. Then we wanted a sports logo…so we wanted two kinds of different, same

theme, but two different looks." This reflects many of the comments by staff that the parents wanted a "public – private school" atmosphere. As many private schools have crest-shaped logos, the hope of the administration was to create a similar atmosphere at the new school. The school colours accompanying the logo were chosen through a student survey. The colours chosen by the majority of students were selected, so students did make a contribution in this regard. In creating the logo, the principal wanted it to reflect what he feels is one of the school mottos, "performance is everything". His idea was to have a logo that had "energy". Thus, it seems the logo at School A reflects the serious academic tone described above by teachers.

At School B, the principal followed quite a different path in developing the school logo. He was a "strong believer that kids have to have a say in [the logo] and what a better way of doing that then some focus groups." Thus, before the school opened, he met with all students coming to the new school in a couple of assemblies as well as having a teacher from the feeder school who was coming to the new school put together a focus group. The teens in the focus group came from several elements of the school population including P.E. Leadership, Leadership, Student Council, Home Economics, Skaters, and Smokers. This focus group met one or two times a month to discuss what students wanted in a school. Once this research was complete, the entire new school population was surveyed regarding school colours and potential logos. Then a graphic artist was hired to come up with logo ideas based on the survey results. According to the principal, "horses were a big thing, but [students] didn't want to be associated with [a large local event] because they thought that was a hick type approach.

You guys are out in the hicks; you're out in cowboy country. That's not what they wanted. But yet the horse theme is so prevalent in this community. Every second house around here had horses." The principal also wanted a logo that was so different it was going "to shock." After investigating various ideas, eventually, a horse logo was created "that was a horse that had nothing to do with the [community event]." According to the principal, creating the logo "was a really interactive approach" where students were key players. This differed significantly to the approach taken by the principal of School A. According to the teachers interviewed, these different approaches have some effect on how students view and associate with their school logo.

One of the founding teachers at School A echoed the principal's comments that the logo represented the area surrounding the school. This teacher commented on the river and the bird as an indigenous bird to the area. The other founding teacher felt the logo did not reflect the students at all, but instead reflected parent expectations. Both founding teachers commented on the fact that the logo is crest-shaped to give it a private school character. However, one teacher was not sure the students were aware of this fact. The new teacher at this school couldn't picture the logo when asked about it, so she had no comments on how it might reflect the staff and students. This may indicate that the logo is not prevalent in the school and that perhaps, as founding teacher two claimed, students don't relate to it, so they don't wear clothing displaying the logo, or talk about it. Maybe the reason students don't relate to the logo is because they did not really play a role in its development, so they feel no ownership of it. Much of the literature on culture suggests that members of an

organization need to be players in the decision-making process in order to feel ownership, which leads to increased feelings of allegiance to the organization.

At School B, all three teachers felt the horse on the logo fit well with the rural community surrounding the school. Founding teacher two thought it encouraged cultural pride in the community, as students like to wear clothing displaying the logo. Surprisingly, the reasons these teachers gave for why it reflected the students are the exact opposite of what the students hoped to portray with their logo. They did not want it to be associated with the rural nature of the school community. This clearly demonstrates Smircich's claim that individuals "interpret and understand their experiences" differently and it is the development of shared meanings which aids in culture creation (55). It seems the teachers and the students see the symbolism surrounding the school logo differently, and yet it still appears to be an effective shared symbol of school culture. However, that aside, it does appear that the students at this school like and relate to their logo. Founding teacher one felt that logos do not reflect their organizations, but that the school logo "has become the embodiment of attitudes of academic excellence, sports excellence, and community spirit." Once again, at this school, the new teacher did not know much about the logo and how it was developed and so had very few comments regarding it. It is interesting that the two new teachers have not developed the same ties to the school logo as the founding teachers, perhaps because they have not been at the school as long and have not had time to develop them. As well, it seems that the students at School B, at least through the eyes of the teachers interviewed, have stronger

ties to their logo. This is most likely a result of the input they were given in creating it, thereby developing feelings of ownership and allegiance.

School Mottos and Slogans

School mottos and slogans often reflect the values or goals of the school. Each principal developed school mottos to reflect what they felt was an important goal to pursue. Interestingly, very few of the teachers at each school actually knew the mottos and slogans. At School A, the principal had developed two mottos: "performance is everything" and "teaching for a lifetime of learning". The first came from a Canada Junior presentation, and the principal liked the message it sent that "it's not about winning. It's about how you perform as a human being." However, even though he knew the principal's reasoning behind the motto, founding teacher two from this school did not have this interpretation of it at all, and felt students did not interpret it in the same way either. Once again, this demonstrates what symbolic cultural research has found: that people will create diverse interpretations of a symbolic aspect an organization's culture (Smircich). This teacher felt that students saw this motto as an indication that they had to perform well, so in fact, it was about winning. He did not like the motto at all, since he felt it creates pressure for students and gives the perception that just trying isn't enough – that one has to perform. He felt the motto only reflects about ten percent of the students and that the rest don't relate to it. The other two teachers from this school did not know of this motto (founding teacher two said the only reason he knew it was because it is boldly displayed in his teaching area). The principal drafted the second motto, "teaching for a lifetime of

learning" through talking with people and then refining it. He felt it reflects the value of lifelong learning and that teaching comes first. He does not support recent movements for student-centered learning; he wanted "to put the emphasis back on the teacher." He felt that without good teaching, learning would not occur. None of the teachers at School A knew this motto, although founding teacher two was aware that there was another motto. It seems that both mottos at this school were developed by the administrator with little collaboration, if any, with staff and students. Once again, it seems that little ownership has developed, and many staff are unaware the mottos even exist.

At School B, the principal referred to two mottos, one solely for athletics and one created by staff for the whole school. The athletic motto was a legend of strength and power associated with the horse logo. It is painted in the gym under a horse mural. The motto was created in collaboration with students in the focus group and it was to this that the two founding teachers vaguely referred as the legend that was created with the school logo, but they didn't know the exact words. The new teacher was not aware of any school mottos or slogans. The other motto at School B was developed by staff at meetings before the school opened. The principal offered them a couple of suggestions that had to do with excellence and setting high standards, and the "staff came together on 'creating opportunities for excellence'." The principal felt this reflected a key value of the entire staff, creating "in this school as many opportunities for success and excellence for these kids" as is possible. Ironically, none of the teachers interviewed were aware of this motto, even though the two founding teachers supposedly played a role in creating it. One of the founding teachers did point

out that the importance of a motto lies in the values it expresses, not in memorizing the exact wording of the motto. It seems that even when the staff were involved in creating the mottos, they have not taken ownership of them. Perhaps the indication here is that mottos are not something that staff feel are important in a school setting, as the role staff played in creating them, as at School B, or not, as at School A, seems to have had little effect on whether they remember the mottos or not.

In reflecting on this part of the interview process, I should have told staff the motto (if they couldn't remember it) and then asked for their comments on it. This would have elicited a greater depth of information, especially regarding whether the motto reflects school values. As I did not do this, I did not really receive any information from staff about how this particular artifact reflects school culture. Although as mentioned above, the fact that staff were unaware of the motto does say something significant about its importance to them, or lack of it. It would also be interesting to do a survey of students to see how many of them knew the school motto.

Artifacts are symbols of the culture of the school that can suggest espoused values and underlying assumptions. The artifacts from each school described above tell a very similar story, demonstrating values of staff cohesiveness, providing educational experiences for students, and creating an academic tone where students can experience success. However, a fundamental difference between the two schools is the role played by staff and students in choosing and developing these artifacts. It appears at School A, that staff and students did not really play a role, while at School B they played a much

larger role. This difference indicates a primary value difference between the two

principals and a different approach to leadership. The principal of School A

seems to lead from a more top-down, vertical approach, having wanted things

like the logo and mottos prepared and given to staff and students. The principal

from School B seems to take a much more horizontal approach to leadership,

valuing staff and student participation in the creation of artifacts. This difference

may have occurred due to differences in the sacred values of the two principals,

or it may have occurred as a result of the influence of the readings done by the

principal of School B. DuFour and Eaker describe the importance of creating

feelings of ownership in the members of an organization, and this principal seems

to have followed this advice. Another difference between the two schools, is that

School A, through looking at their logo, mottos, and resource allocation, seems to

place more emphasis on academics. The desire for a private school character

(private schools are often known for their high academics), the "performance is

everything" motto, and equipping classrooms, especially the rooms where

academic subjects are taught all demonstrate this. School B appears to place

less emphasis on academic achievement, focusing instead on student

improvement in all areas (athletics, academics, and arts), and on providing

opportunities for students to learn and excel. Their logo emphasizes strength

and pride in accomplishments, their motto is about offering students learning

opportunities, and the allocation of resources indicates a desire to provide

students with numerous interesting learning opportunities (technology).

Espoused Values

Asking people outright about their values, and the values of those around them, is one way to discover the espoused or spoken values of an organization (Schein, *1^(st) Edition* 15). In studying this aspect of the organization, principals and teachers were asked what they felt were the values of staff, parents, and students. As this study focuses on the principal's role in creating culture, the two principal's values were also examined through the visions they developed for their schools, as well as through their priorities in hiring staff, and through advice they would offer to future principals who faced the task of opening a new secondary school. So not only were teachers and administrators being asked about their own values, they were being asked what they thought others valued. It is interesting to compare what people said they value as opposed to what others think they do, based on their actions and what they have said. As mentioned in the relevant literature chapter, sometimes people's espoused values do not actually reflect their underlying assumptions. Thus, at times while the responses on other topics were very similar, they were quite different when it came to staff commenting on the principal's values. It is through examining these similarities and differences that the underlying assumptions of staff and administration begin to become visible. A second way one can see the values of an organization is by looking at what types of professional development the organization has undergone. Professional development, for the most part, is supposed to be teacher led, and the workshops staffs choose for their schools often indicate their values.

School Vision

Many authors in effective schools literature argue that in order to create an effective school, the principal must have a vision (Stolp, *Transforming School Culture* 60; DuFour and Eaker 22). Thus, one of the first questions asked of each administrator was what his vision was for the new school (what he wanted to accomplish). Through examining this vision, it should be possible to see some of the values held by each principal. The principal from School A envisioned a school where students and staff were able to work in harmony. Part of creating the vision for the school involves hiring staff, as one should hire people who share one's vision, or who will enable one's vision to become reality. Thus, in order to create his vision, the principal talked about things such as "setting the tone" by hiring a strong head secretary and a vice principal with "a mission". As well, he felt "staff [was] always the key. You know the mood in the school is the staff." He believed a school needed an emotionally healthy staff that could deal with student problems as they arose. In hiring staff, the principal looked for a "staff [that] thinks professionally." One way he tried to ensure he hired a professional staff was by creating a different style of timetable from other schools in the district, wherein classes would be much longer. He felt this would eliminate teachers who didn't want to be with students, as they would be unwilling to teach longer classes. As well, he looked for "teachers that were extremely knowledgeable in their area and that had a track record of success." He recognized that opening a new school was a lot of work for staff and he looked for people prepared to put in the extra time. He also recognized the value of hiring teachers with a variety of experiential backgrounds. He didn't want an

entire school of what he referred to as "superstars" as he was concerned they would not be able to work together. As well, this principal wanted teachers who would be innovative and willing to work with the new technology in the school. Furthermore, he wanted to create "a high trust, high performance environment" where teachers don't feel that someone was overseeing them, but instead allowed them some independence to do their job and perform as professionals. An example of how he demonstrates this value for professionalism is that the school has no sign-in book for teachers. Finally, this principal wanted "people that have integrity and are nice." This last criterion illuminates one of the core values of the principal, hiring nice people. Another vision this principal had for the school was for each of the groups (staff, students, and parents) to "feel valued and to feel their ideas that they may have would be valued." According to him, people don't need to always agree, but they need to feel comfortable bringing their ideas and concerns forward. In examining these visions for the school, some of the principal's values become visible, such as a harmonious work environment, a professional staff, hard work, willingness to adapt to new situations (the new timetable), success, broad experience, collegiality, self-motivation and trust, and willingness to listen to others. This principal's focus on hiring, from the head secretary, to the vice principal and the staff, as a way of achieving his vision demonstrates his managerial leadership style.

The principal of School B also envisioned a school where staff and students work together to provide the best educational opportunities for students. However his approach was somewhat different. Before opening the school, he did some reading on shaping school culture, relying on effective schools

literature, such as that of DuFour and Eaker and Fullan. In fact, I noticed during the interview that he had well-read copies of books by DuFour and Eaker and Fullan on a corner table in his office. At one point he even talked about how he had provided portions of DuFour and Eaker's book for staff members prior to the school opening and that these chapters provided the basis for discussion at staff meetings and professional development during the first year. When asked what his goal for the school was, he responded, "I wanted to have a school that was different from the cookie-cutter, standard, ordinary type of school...[I wanted] to create a very different and unique environment for kids and staff and something that would not be the normal type of school that traditionally is seen in this district." Words like "unique", "creative" and innovative" were used to describe his vision for the school. Like the principal of School A, he wanted the school to be a place where students wanted to be. The ways in which he went about meeting this vision were to set high expectations in all areas (athletics and academics) and to build positive relationships. He felt that this would enable "people [to] have the ability to buy into the culture that you're developing and that there is ownership and that everybody feels a part of that, so that it is not coming from the top down, but that it is a grassroot that everybody is working together in that same setting their goals, and vision for the school." One visible way this goal of everyone feeling ownership has been met is the fact that this school has the lowest graffiti costs in the district. This clearly demonstrates that students are willing to take care of their school and value it.

Like the principal of School A in hiring staff, the principal of School B wanted teachers who liked teaching and working with students. As well he was

looking for a strong knowledge base in curriculum. This was evidenced by the interview questions regarding the Integrated Resource Package mentioned by founding teacher two. As well, the "non-confrontational respect" value was considered when hiring teachers. He wanted teachers who were "child-centered, [had] high expectations, [were] strong [in] academic curriculum background, [wanted] relationship building, and [wanted to work] and [try] to be part of a team in a school that wanted to do something very different and creative and new." He wanted people who could teach in this unique environment. This school, like School A, had a very different timetable to that traditionally found in schools throughout the district. Although not identical to School A's, this timetable also included unusually long blocks that would force teachers to change activities several times. According to the principal, "the more different types of strategies [a teacher had], the more excited [he] was about having that teacher on board." As mentioned above, many teachers struggled with this in the first semester. Through examining these visions, once again several of the principal's values become visible such as educational theory, uniqueness, creativity, innovation, relationship building, working together to solve problems, staff and student involvement in decision making, non-confrontation, and willingness to adapt to new situations. The visions of this principal seem more idealistic than those of the principal of School A, perhaps reflecting his more parental leadership style. Parents usually want to create the ideal situation for their children and try to set up unique opportunities to help them meet their goals.

Staff Values

At School A, when teachers and administrators were asked about staff values, there was a wide range of responses. One area of commonality was academics and striving to prepare students for the immediate future, their provincial exams, and their future beyond high school. The principal also pointed to relationship building, caring for students, and valuing students as individuals as important values of staff. He gave several examples of how staff demonstrated these values through being available to help kids and student involvement in staff-led activities. As one of his priorities in hiring was to find "nice people" it is not surprising that he sees this aspect of the staff. As well, he suggested that teachers value providing relevant activities outside the classroom that are curriculum related such as fieldtrips. In other words, he felt staff value good teaching methods and he saw them as being very student-centered in their values. The two founding teachers at this school both mentioned that staff value students. However, founding teacher one phrased his comment in an interesting way; he said the staff thought they were student-centered. The word "thought" indicates that this teacher didn't really feel this was true. He did not expand on this though. The teachers repeated some of the values the principal saw in staff, but also mentioned professional and collegial values as well. Founding teacher one felt that two staff values were the community and change, which was reflected in the desire to come to a new school. He also felt that many held middle class values. Founding teacher two felt that the children were the first priority, but that community, diversity, professionalism, parent input, and other staff members, both personally and professionally, were also values. The new

teacher saw professionalism, socializing, staying positive, and professional growth (striving to improve teaching methods) as important. It is curious that the principal did not mention values of professionalism as this was also one of the criteria he had in hiring staff. Perhaps he did not feel this was a value, but an expectation of all teachers, although that can be said of many of the values outlined above.

At School B, the principal summed up staff values into three: respect (rapport building with students), setting and achieving high standards, and an honest work ethic (striving). These are similar to the vision he had when he opened the school, so either he hired teachers who shared these values or he has superimposed his own onto the teachers at the school. It seems that the former is the case as all three teachers from School B felt that the educational process and trying to pull the best from students so they could be successful was the primary value. This method of hiring staff follows the advice of the effective schools literature as according to Stolp,

> Perhaps one of the principal's toughest yet most vital tasks is selecting staff members who share his or her values and beliefs about education. There is nothing more counterproductive to creating a healthy school culture than for the faculty and principal to hold incompatible convictions about what schooling should be. A principal who is mindful of culture-building seeks faculty members who are not only technically qualified but whose values are consistent with the principal's vision of excellence. (*Transforming School Culture* 85)

Founding teacher one felt that involvement in school activities and working with peers were also important values (relationship building). Founding teacher two thought high standards for academic excellence and physical activity and athletics, and what she described as "Renaissance" values, were also important.

The new teacher felt the staff was very student-oriented, seeing raising student self-esteem as an added value of staff. As one can see, all of these can be incorporated into the values the principal sees the staff as holding. If these are some of the sacred values of teachers, by hiring teachers who shared his own sacred values, the principal would not have the virtually impossible task of trying to change them, as Corbett, Firestone and Rossman argue that "challenges to the sacred are greeted immediately with forthright resistance and subsequently – if the threat continues- with the creation of a culture of opposition" (36).

Parent Values

Parent values can have a great influence on the school community. At School A, all three teachers and the principal agreed that high academic achievement and the success that accompanies it were definitely parental values. The principal also felt that involvement in activities and a safe environment were also common. Founding teacher one felt that parents display fairly middle class values, and appreciate the private school feel of the school as well as the quiet area in which they reside. He suggested that parents value success, demonstrated by material possessions, but might not value formal education. This conclusion was drawn from the fact that many of the parents successfully run their own businesses, but might not have been formally educated. Founding teacher two also felt that parents value the public/private school atmosphere, as well as post secondary opportunities, a teaching staff that is going to deliver these opportunities, and the ability to give input. He also felt the parents liked to celebrate accomplishments in a "big picture way", but not the little things that

occur every day. The new teacher felt she had had very little contact with parents, and thus could not really comment on their values, but through her limited contact at parent teacher interviews, felt that academics and future opportunities were of value to them. As academic success was a value seen by all, it is safe to say this reflects the main value of parents at this school.

At School B, the principal thought the parents had high expectations in all areas of the school (academics, athletics, arts) and wanted their children to have the educational opportunities necessary to succeed after high school. The two founding teachers described this aspect of the parents as being academic-minded, constantly wanting to know about marks, and wanting their children to continue on to some type of post secondary education. Like the principal of School A, this principal also saw creating a safe environment as a concern of parents. This seems like it would be common to all parents, not unique to the parents of these two particular schools. Founding teacher one felt that parents wanted their children to do as well as they had or better (he saw the parents as affluent, living in large houses on nice properties, and as being well-educated business people). He felt parents had high expectations of both staff and students. Founding teacher two felt that parents were very demanding, and concerned with high standards of performance in athletics and academics. As at School A, the new teacher felt that she was not really qualified to comment on parent values, but felt that parents were concerned with student improvement. Once again, it seems the main value of parents at this school were student achievement; however, unlike at School A, these parents seem to value overall achievement, not just academic achievement. At both schools the values staff

and administration attributed to parents seemed to reflect common parental values everywhere in the district.

Student Values

Student values at each school, as seen by staff and administrators, were quite similar. At both schools, the principals saw the primary value to be social interactions (the principal of School B referred to this as the school culture) that the schools provide. The principal of School A observed that the population make-up of his school (numerous international students) made the social aspects of school very important to those students as they might not have opportunities for socialization elsewhere. He also identified opportunities and school activities and very briefly academics, as student values. Considering the emphasis placed on academics by parents, staff, and administration at this school, it is surprising the principal did not see this as a priority to students. The principal at School B mentioned several student values such as respect, a safe and positive environment, what they're learning, their teachers, and the new school facility itself. Several of these echo the values of the principal, staff, and parents. This demonstrates how interlinked the values of staff, students, parents and administrators are. By all emphasizing the same values, the school has a common direction that everyone is working towards. It is important to keep in mind though, that these views may not be accurate, but may instead be influenced by the principals' and teachers' own goals and values.

Many of the teachers tended to group students into categories according to their values. For example, there are those who value academics, while a

different category might place more importance on social interactions. These were the two seen as most prevalent throughout all the interviews. At School A, founding teacher one thought student values reflected their parent's capitalist ones: they valued material things such as big houses and big cars, and the university education and good job necessary to get these things. Founding teacher two thought there was a difference between juniors and seniors; he thought juniors valued the more social aspects of school and were more superficial, while seniors were more focused on their future and academics. The new teacher felt students valued both academics and their social lives. At School B, founding teacher one thought students valued tolerance and displayed a pride in their school, as well as academics and the social side of school. Founding teacher two felt students emphasized technology, athletics, student council, student government, and grad council as well as fairness. She also felt they were very marks driven (but not necessarily concerned with what they were learning). As at School A, the new teacher felt they valued academics (wanting to improve) and socializing. It seems the social aspects of school, closely followed by academics are the two many areas students place importance in. These seem to be fairly common to all students in this age group, as the teen years are a period of self-discovery and personality growth, so perhaps student values differ very little from school to school. As well, their values seem to be largely influenced by those of their parents.

Administrator Values

After examining the values held by staff, students, and parents, I compared these to the espoused values of the administrators. Here two viewpoints were offered, as staff were asked what they felt were the administrator's values, and the administrators were asked about their values through questions dealing with their visions for the school and the advice they would offer a principal opening a new school. At School A, all three teachers interviewed felt that the principal valued academic success, as demonstrated by high provincial exam scores and numerous scholarships. Founding teacher two stated that the principal often "clamps down on things that interfere with academics", that he "runs a really tight ship", and that he wants to provide the best possible educational opportunities for students. The new teacher felt the principal was concerned with keeping things focused and accountable. She also felt that he was concerned with creating a balance of social opportunities. She was the only teacher who saw this side of the principal.

In School B, two teachers saw the students as the principal's first priority: wanting the school to be the best place for students to learn, wanting all students to experience success, and valuing the social aspect of school for students. Two teachers also commented that academics were important, mentioning provincial exam results and best teaching practices. All three teachers at this school identified staff as being important to the principal, although in different ways. One teacher said he valued providing support for the staff, while another identified staff contributions in areas other than teaching, while the third mentioned staff socials. Thus, academically, the values of the two principals seem to reflect

those of staff, students and parents, or vice versa. This is not surprising, as the main purpose of school is to provide an education for students. However, the principal at School B seemed very concerned with the social aspects of school too, for both staff and students. Once again, this may be a reflection of his effective schools readings, as this suggests that providing social interaction opportunities is an important part of culture development (DuFour and Eaker 132). These informal social activities allow staff to discuss problems in a non-threatening environment, thereby bringing issues out into the open that may otherwise go undiscussed (which could lead to future problems or tension).

Professional Development

By looking at the types of professional development in which a school has participated, one can begin to see some of the values held by staff and administrators. Each of the schools studied focused on staff building and team building exercises in the first year. Each school also chose to have two professional days in the summer in the last week of August, and then take two in lieu days during the year. This allowed staff to get together before the rush of the school year began. Staff members from both schools had very positive things to say about this process, although School A has since voted as a staff not to continue it next year for union contract reasons (there is concern that if teachers come in voluntarily in the summer that eventually these days might be added to the school year). This may demonstrate a change in the staff culture since the school's inception. Founding teacher one and the principal both commented that as the school grows and with district cutbacks, increasingly more staff are being

placed at the school as opposed to being hired (going through the interview process). Founding teacher one mentioned that some of the new staff do not "fit" with the original staff. Perhaps the decision to eliminate the professional development that was mostly focused on team building and relationship building among staff members is a reflection of changing staff values.

At School A, professional development has centered on such activities as developing communication skills, ESL needs such as multicultural issues, computer technology and the use of applications, Covey's seven steps, "verbal judo", and of course, staff bonding, as mentioned above. The principal described many of these professional development topics as relationship building opportunities among staff, as well as between staff and students. Many of the professional days have offered a choice of workshops to staff and provided time for departments to meet. The new teacher at School A commented that she does not find school professional development very useful and would rather go to topic-specific conferences (in her subject area), while founding teachers one and two showed an appreciation of professional development that addressed issues unique to the school (such as ESL delivery) and staff building activities. It is interesting that the teacher new to staff this year did not express the same values as the two founding teachers surrounding professional development. There may be a couple of reasons for this: as a person newer to the profession, she may find subject area focused professional development very useful in developing a resource base of teaching materials, whereas the teachers who have more experience would already have a substantial resource base. Secondly, when a person is new to a group that has had three years to develop social ties, she

might feel more isolated or awkward at staff building workshops as her knowledge of staff is less than everyone else's. Of course, it is through these staff building opportunities that new members are "brought into the fold" and are initiated in the ways of the staff and school. Much of the professional development at School A seems to have demonstrated values for staff collegiality and relationship building, as well as wanting to provide educational opportunities for all students, for example through ESL delivery.

At School B, professional development in the first year was very introspective, asking teachers to take a look at themselves and their teaching practices. They looked at school culture and developed goals and vision and mission statements. Since then, professional development has covered topics such as school enhancement, technology (computer applications), team building, special education delivery, and brain theory. Some department time has also been provided. According to the principal, much of the focus in the first year was on developing common goals and culture building, and DuFour and Eaker's book was used as a starting point for many discussions. This appears to indicate that the principal has had a lot of influence over professional development topics, especially in the first year. Another indication of his involvement in planning professional development occurred when he talked about the new material from DuFour that the staff was slated to discuss at the upcoming summer workshops. However, founding teacher two felt that professional development was not administratively driven (and according to teacher contracts, very little of it should be). This discrepancy between the statements of the principal and founding teacher two suggests some teachers on staff are unaware of where professional

development topics are originating. This teacher also expressed dissatisfaction with the upcoming topics as well as with previous ones and wondered where they originated. She would like to see it improved to include activities more relevant to every day teaching in the classroom. She suggested workshops more relevant to her teaching area, but realized that in order to enact this change she would need to join the professional development committee. Perhaps staff are not as enthusiastic about culture building as the principal, or perhaps this is just the viewpoint of one staff member. In summary, the data suggest that staff building and use of technology have been the focus at both schools in their first four years of operation. It is not surprising that School A has also done some work on ESL delivery as the population of this school has a large ESL concentration.

Underlying Assumptions

The underlying assumptions of an organization are very difficult to unearth due to their nature as unspoken beliefs of the organization, which have developed as spoken values become entrenched. By examining all the spoken values and looking at examples given by teachers and administrators to illustrate their points and looking for commonalities, one can begin to glimpse some of the underlying assumptions. However, caution needs to be taken at this point, because it is more likely that one could go astray in drawing conclusions about this aspect of culture. However, as a participant observer at School A, it was a little easier to discover the underlying assumptions of that school.

At School A, one of the fundamental underlying assumptions appears to be that quality teaching and focussed instructional time leads to academic success. This is reflected by both the artifacts and the espoused values at this school. Artifacts such as the crest-shaped, private school styled logo, to the "performance is everything" motto, and the perception by teachers that a primary focus in resource allocation was equipping classrooms for quality teaching, all mirror the value placed on academic achievement at this school. The espoused values of the staff, parents, and administration, as indicated by the teachers interviewed, show that academic achievement is a top priority, to the point that activities interfering with this achievement are discouraged. As mentioned earlier, founding teacher two claimed that the principal "clamped down on" activities that would take away from instructional time. Both founding teachers at this school also indicated that extra curricular activities, such as the athletic program, were not a focus. As well, the new teacher indicated that she spent a great deal of her lunch time in her classroom tutoring students and that she perceived many of her colleagues did as well. The underuse of the staff room at lunch also indicates that teachers are engaged elsewhere, and the prime indication by teachers appears to be that they are helping students with their academics. All of these are indicators that an underlying assumption of this school's culture is that time spent on task and quality instruction will lead to high academic achievement.

Another underlying assumption of the principal at School A became visible when he discussed his hiring practices. He suggested that by hiring "nice people", they would be able to work together harmoniously and that details like

quality instruction would fall into place. This indicates that he holds the underlying assumption that hiring people of certain dispositions or character will lead to certain types of actions, namely the creation of a harmonious, effective work environment. Founding teacher one also indicated that the staff in the first year "fit" well together, suggesting that there is some truth in this underlying assumption.

At School B, one of the fundamental underlying assumptions appears to be that if a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere is present, students and staff will want to be at school, and that this will in turn positively affect their performance in all areas. In other words, the material culture of the school will have positive effects on staff and students. This is demonstrated through the schools artifacts, from the school logo of "creating opportunities for excellence" to the allocation of resource money to equipping the classrooms and creating a pleasant atmosphere by providing couches, benches and trees throughout the facility. The espoused values of the principal and staff also reflect this underlying assumption, as both groups stated that providing students with opportunities for success, whether in sports, academics, or arts, is a primary focus of both the staff and administration. The principal's recognition of the importance of creating a welcoming material school culture also indicates this underlying assumption.

The principal of School B appears to hold an underlying assumption about the role theoretical knowledge plays in practice. His reading in the effective schools literature and school culture prior to opening his new school shows the value he places on theoretical knowledge. The ways in which he carefully adhered to the advice offered in DuFour and Eaker's *Creating the New*

American School, including developing a shared vision, managing the climate of the school, and celebrating the successes of his staff and students demonstrates his belief that theoretical knowledge can and should be applied in practice. A number of his comments, for example, that on a future professional day, the staff and administrators at his school will return to the theoretical, to evaluate what has occurred in the first four years of operation and to set goals for the future, confirm his belief that translating theory into practice is an ongoing process, not something one only does to initiate a project.

A second underlying assumption of the principal at School B is that his role as a principal is one of a father figure. This can be seen in all of the seemingly unconscious ways in which he views his school, staff, and students as an extended family. For instance, throughout his interview, he referred to his students as "kids", a colloquial term often used by parents to refer to their offspring. He talked about the importance of creating the right atmosphere in places like the open center area of the school, which could be seen as the kitchen or family room of the school, as this is where students meet for lunch and to converse between classes. He created a "homey" atmosphere by providing couches and benches for students to sit on. As well, he provided potted plants throughout the school. Even his ways of celebrating achievements confirm this belief as he mentions the inclusion of food in the form of cakes, or pizza and pop at all celebrations. "Breaking bread together" is an important symbol of bonding between friends and family members. By including this in school celebrations, he is symbolically promoting a family-type relationship between staff and students. The fact that he "provides" all these things for his staff and students puts him in a

fatherly role. Founding teacher two recognized this as she referred to him as the "patriarch" of the school. Even though the term "patriarch" can have negative connotations when applied to leadership, in this case, I feel the intention was to convey the impression that the principal is somewhat of a father figure to staff and students, embodying the positive images that the term "father" connotes: a provider, someone to turn to in times of difficulty, a problem solver, a coach, and his children's biggest fan.

It is difficult to uncover the underlying assumptions of an organization, as these are the unspoken beliefs of its members. The underlying assumptions outlined above are conjectures based on the evidence gleaned from interviewing the six staff members and the two principals. Thus, one must recognize them as such and keep in mind that they are hypotheses only, and as is the nature of cultural studies, these underlying assumptions will adapt and change over time.

SUMMATION

Each of the principals participating in this study has played a role in creating very different, yet successful, school cultures. Although they have each taken several similar steps in creating the cultures at their respective schools, such as having a clear vision, creating school logos and mottos, allocating resources to supply classrooms with all the necessities to teach, and providing professional development opportunities for team building, the ways in which they went about taking each of these steps is where the differences occur. These differences are most likely due to their divergent leadership styles. Morgan

argues that "the challenge facing modern managers is to become accomplished at the art of metaphor: To find appropriate ways of seeing, understanding, and shaping the situations with which they have to deal" (348). Each of the principals studied had adopted different metaphors that reflect their leadership styles. The principal of School B created a school as a family metaphor, while the principal of School A created a school as an organism metaphor. The development of these metaphors was probably not conscious, and yet tells a great deal about their differing leadership styles.

The principal of School A has a very managerial leadership style that is organic in its approach. His style appears to reflect the open systems metaphor Morgan describes, since in shaping culture at his school, he saw the school as an ever-changing unit, and recognized that to create harmony, all parts of this unit needed to function and interact in concordance. Therefore, he hired teachers who he felt could work well together, he hired an office staff who he felt could help set the tone in the school, and he found a vice principal who could complement different programs in the school such as athletics. The artifacts and espoused values at this school all reflect the underlying assumption that quality instruction and instructional time will lead to high academic achievement. The interlacing of all parts of the organization to function as a whole is a primary characteristic of the organic metaphor.

The principal of School B has a very different leadership style, demonstrating Morgan's culture metaphor. He read some theoretical material about creating culture in schools, and then applied this knowledge to his situation. Although I have criticized the effective schools literature for its

superficiality and for its prescription of a set of steps to develop culture, this principal appears to have had an affinity for it. His fatherly leadership style complemented the advice offered in the effective schools literature and he has successfully created an effective school culture.

Morgan suggests that "the metaphors and ideas through which we see and read situations influence how we act" (350). The differing leadership styles of the two principals in this study and the slightly different ways which they went about creating culture in their respective schools clearly confirms this argument.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

From this study it is clear to see that there are several steps a principal can take to shape the culture of his school. The steps each principal took were examined within the framework of Schein's functionalist approach to the study of culture, by examining artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions at each school. Through thoroughly interviewing the two principals about different aspects of their school's culture, and through comparing their responses to the responses given by three staff members (two founding teachers and one new teacher), it is possible to see the role each principal played in the development of culture at their school. It is also apparent that the leadership style of the principal has a profound effect on the steps he chooses to take and on the ways in which his decisions influence school culture.

Even though the two principals in this study had very different leadership styles, many of the steps they took in initiating culture development in their schools were similar. However, due to their differing leadership styles and visions, each principal went about taking steps in somewhat different ways, and it

is these discrepancies that seem to have had the largest impact in creating the differences in culture at these two schools (discounting the differences due to student demographics). As well, one principal had clearly read about culture development through examining effective schools literature (DuFour & Eaker) prior to opening his school. This also influenced the decisions he made when initiating culture, demonstrating the role theory can play in culture development. Based on these findings, it is possible to draw theoretical conclusions about the role of the principal in developing culture and about the influence of leadership style on culture. As well, it is possible to offer practical considerations and recommendations to future principals facing the daunting task of initiating a new school culture. This study also offers some implications for future research.

THEORETICAL CONCLUSIONS

The study of organizational culture and school culture has gained prevalence over the past two decades. Cultural analysis examines the more informal aspects of culture, such as symbols, rituals and ceremonies, as opposed to the more structural and mechanistic studies of the past. Authors like Morgan, Van Maanen and Maxwell suggest that the best way to study the culture of an organization is through participant observation, and by taking an ethnographic approach. This approach has allowed for the rich depth of cultural data provided in this study.

To date, much of the study of culture in the administrative and leadership fields relies on a functionalist approach, such as Schein's, while as yet only a few authors take into account the symbolic, as Smircich does. As well, studies of

culture often take one approach while discounting the other, ignoring Morgan's caution that relying on any one approach in the field does not provide a sufficient lens through which to view an organization (347). Just as the argument surrounding qualitative versus quantitative research has not proved that one is better than the other, but instead that both have value, particularly when used in a complementary way, exclusively applying either functionalist or symbolic approaches to one organization does not provide a holistic view of culture. Schultz is able to show the merits of each approach by applying them to the study of an organization; however, even though he utilizes both, he does not integrate them. Throughout my research I have not discovered any studies that apply both approaches simultaneously. Although this study looked at the principal's role in the creation of culture through a functionalist lens, in my analysis of teacher and principal responses to the different aspects of culture at their school, especially visible aspects such as artifacts, the role each person played in creating their own meanings was taken into account, thereby integrating symbolic considerations. There appears to be merit in using a combination of approaches in examining an organization's culture.

Much of the literature on organizational culture examines already existing organizations (Schein, *2nd Ed.*; Schultz; Peters & Waterman). This literature may take into account the role of the founder in developing culture as Schein does, but neglects to include what the founder did to initiate culture. This is especially true of the effective schools literature. Many of the authors, like Stolp, DuFour and Eaker, and Deal and Peterson argue that the principal plays a prominent role in shaping the culture of a school, a position consistent with the results of this

study. However, they do not examine this role from the school's inception, instead they look how the principal shapes and changes an already existing school culture. They also argue that by creating an effective school culture, students will experience greater success, which is usually measured quantitatively. The first problem here, as Sergiovanni points out (although he himself does it to some extent), is that it too narrowly defines an effective school as one with high student performance as measured by standardized tests. Many teachers, parents and administrators would argue that an effective school is much more than this. In an intuitive way, they understand the importance symbolic theorists, like Smircich, see in how people determine their own meanings regarding cultural symbols and the effect this has on the culture of the school.

Another problem with the effective schools literature is the current trend towards "how-to" manuals for principals that only briefly (or sometimes not at all) examine the underlying rationale for taking certain steps in shaping school culture. The degree to which the theoretical is discussed varies from author to author, with some of the more prominent researchers, like Sergiovanni, spending considerably more time discussing leadership theory and practice, while others, such as DuFour and Eaker, spend more time focussing on the practical. Without this theoretical background, these books present a series of prescribed steps a principal can follow. This is a very mechanistic and reductionist, not to mention superficial, approach that cannot reflect the true complexity of culture. While the whole book is dedicated to culture, it is fragmented into chapters devoted to

different aspects of culture, such as symbols and ceremonies, but then a cohesive view of culture that combines all of these aspects is never offered.

Although very inspirational, these books generally fail to account for resistance to change, why this resistance may be occurring, and how to deal with it. There is literature in the field that does address this, such as Corbett, Firestone and Rossman, who discuss resistance to changes in school culture, Sarason, who discusses the problems associated with change, and Samier, who discusses rituals of intimidation, but most books on effective schools ignore these elements. Although some authors, like Deal and Peterson, do discuss negative cultures, or what they refer to as "toxic" cultures, they only discuss strategies for changing these cultures, not how to avoid creating them in the first place.

Most effective schools literature also fails to explicitly address leadership style, instead focusing on the actions a principal should take to develop culture, creating a very functional approach to leadership. This omission is surprising considering how educational leadership literature, and authors such as Gronn and Greenfield, have identified leadership style as an important factor in the development of a school's culture. The current effective schools literature appears to echo the limitations of early leadership literature, in that the effect of different leadership styles is treated in a very functionalist manner. For example, certain types of companies are seen as requiring a certain type of leadership to create an optimal culture (e.g. Fiedler's Contingency Theory). In the effective schools literature, the assumption appears to be that effective principals will display certain common leadership traits, reflected by their actions to shape the culture of their schools. Although in most texts, such as DuFour and Eaker's

Creating the New American School and Stolp's *Transforming School Culture:*
Stories, Symbols, Values and the Leader's Role, these traits are not explicitly
outlined, a transformational leadership style appears to be what is being
described. However, this study clearly demonstrates that various leadership
styles can be used to create an effective school. Both schools in this study have
effective cultures, and yet these cultures and the leadership styles that have
influenced them are quite different.

Authors like Gronn and Sergiovanni clearly recognize the important role
played by followers in the leadership relationship, particularly the importance of
follower identification with a leader in determining their willingness to follow.
Sergiovanni also argues that it is this identification with the principal and with the
shared values of staff, students and parents that leads to a strong school culture
(*The Principalship* 49). This study clearly substantiates this through the way in
which the teachers and principal at School B share a set of educational values
(that all students need to be given opportunities for success). This belief has
become part of the culture at that school and is reflected in many of the school's
artifacts.

One of the outcomes of this study is a personal disappointment in the
prescriptive nature of the effective schools literature, which perpetuates the
mechanistic theory plaguing much early (and some current) organization theory.
This is especially alarming considering the current popularity of several effective
schools books brought about by public outcry for school reform. After reading
three of these books (DuFour & Eaker; Stolp, *Transforming School Culture*; Deal
& Peterson, *Shaping School Culture*), it was difficult to tell one from the other, as

they all followed the same pattern and offered basically the same advice. In other words, they seem to apply a formula that assumes the same conditions, the same principal practices, and the same principal style. While some of the advice offered is effective, as mentioned throughout this study, these "recipe for success" books require all the right ingredients to be present in order for the promised success to occur. These ingredients include: good communication, a strong shared vision, the development of artifacts, rituals and ceremonies that emphasize the vision, a focus on excellence in teaching, a principal who can monitor and foster growth in all of these areas, and a staff who is willing to accept and adapt to changes and dedicate the necessary time, effort and participation. As mentioned earlier, these books also assume an absence of resistance. It is simply not the nature of public schooling to have all of these ingredients present all of the time. Often one may begin with the right ingredients if one is fortunate, but as districts undergo budget cuts and layoffs, principals lose degrees of control over the mixing process. In this study, the concerns expressed by each principal regarding the effects of staff members being "placed" at the school as opposed to hired is a prime example. Principals have virtually no control over teachers being placed because they is not allowed to interview these teachers, so they have no knowledge as to whether these teachers will share the visions and goals of the staff. Whereas when principals hire a teacher, they are able to conduct an interview to assess how this person will "fit" into the overall school culture. This example clearly demonstrates that there are often factors beyond the principal's influence. These can have a large effect on the school's culture and yet the effective schools literature appears to give little consideration to this.

However, that said, there is a place for these books as a starting point in considering the profound effect of culture on student achievement and the overall happiness of students and staff. In this regard, they are useful, but to truly begin to understand the culture of their school and their role in shaping and developing this culture, principals need to move beyond these books to research that is steeped in organizational culture theory. It is also important for principals to remain current about developments in the field, since like the culture of an organization, it is an area of theory that is ever evolving.

In this study, I chose to examine areas that have not been prevalent. In educational culture and educational leadership literature, up to this point, very little research has been done regarding the principal's role in initiating culture. As well, it demonstrates the value of taking a more complex and comprehensive view of school culture. As school districts grow and expand, many principals at both the elementary and secondary levels will need guidance in developing positive, effective school cultures. Aspects of this research, to a lesser extent, are also relevant to districts where school closures and school amalgamations are taking place, as these principals are also faced with creating a new school culture within an already existing school. There is definitely a need for more research in this area (this suggestion will be further explored at the end of this chapter).

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are several recommendations for principal practice and training that have arisen from this study. Before continuing, however, a reminder is needed that leadership style will have an effect on how these considerations can be applied by principals. Therefore, when pondering each, principals should always do so through the reflective lens of their own leadership style. I have identified five considerations a principal should make when faced with the task of initiating a school culture. These are not exclusive, but are what I have determined are some of the most important factors. As well, all of these considerations are closely inter-related, and it is how they fit together that creates the whole cultural "package".

The first consideration principals should make when opening a new school is to gain an understanding of the community in which the school will be located. In doing so, principals will begin to understand the values held by students and parents that will have an effect on the culture of their school. If parents and students do not share the principal's values, he/she will have a difficult time creating an effective culture. These values also need to be reflected in the shared vision of the school, or it will be the principal's vision, not the school's.

This leads to the second consideration, which is one of the most important outlined in the literature, as well as discussed by each principal. A principal must have a clear vision for the school. Without a sense of vision, the staff and students have no direction, and the culture of the school will flounder. However, this vision cannot be that of the principal alone, although this may be where it

begins; it must become the shared vision of students, staff and parents if it is to truly aid in the development of school culture. One way to create this shared vision is to hire staff members who already share it through their sacred norms as teachers. Another way, which can complement the first, is to work with students and staff to shape the vision, so they feel ownership of it. The line between guiding and manipulating is very fine, and principals who step over the line may find the culture of their schools forming in ways they never intended. If students and teachers realize they are being manipulated, a culture of resistance will most likely develop. Thus principals need to be careful to avoid manipulation.

Each of the principals participating in this study began with clear visions for their schools. For example, the principal of School A felt that staff harmony and professionalism and student academic achievement were important visions for the school. These visions were reflected through his hiring of staff, resource allocation, the design of the school logo, the school mottos, and the values he attributed to staff and parents. His more managerial leadership style also reflected these visions. Staff professionalism was recognized by not asking staff to sign in, and, as one teacher put it, by not "bugging" staff. Student achievement was encouraged through celebrations of excellence and through good teaching practice. The principal at School B felt that success for all students, in some aspect of school, be it academics, sports, or fine arts, was an important goal, as well as creating a "family" atmosphere where students and staff would feel welcome. These goals were also reflected through his hiring of staff, resource allocation, the school mottos, the importance he placed on celebration and the values he attributed to staff and parents. Once again, his leadership style

reflected these goals, as he seemed to take on a very parental role (one teacher even described him as the patriarch of the school), wanting all his "kids" to succeed and wanting to create a very comfortable, "homey" atmosphere in the school, through providing couches and benches for students, bringing nature into the school in the form of potted trees, and using food as a celebratory tool. Even though their styles were very different, each principal was able to create the culture they envisioned.

A third area of consideration stems from the school vision and its physical manifestations: the visual aspects of culture or school artifacts. Not only do principals aid in the development of these artifacts, they are primary players in perpetuating their symbolic significance. Upon examining the results of this study in regards to school logos, it appears that the best approach to take in their development is to allow students to have a large input, as this will again create feelings of ownership, which will hopefully lead to identification with the logo and school pride. Without this input, it appears students have a difficult time identifying with the school logo, which means this element of culture is lost. According to the results of this study, mottos and slogans developed by the principal do not seem to have much impact on the school culture, as really no one seems to remember them other than the principal. Perhaps this indicates that students and staff need to have more input in their creation or that they need to better utilized in every day school interactions.

A fourth consideration is the role celebration will play in one's school. Throughout this study, it has become apparent that many teachers feel this is an important aspect of school culture. Celebration can take different forms from

recognition of accomplishments, to rewards for work well done. Some of the literature cautions that offering staff rewards for their involvement will lead to an end to this involvement if the rewards end. I don't agree with this point, as I feel that most staff view the rewards they receive for involvement, such as a staff shirt, or a dinner out, more as symbolic recognition. The monetary value of what they receive is not important, it may simply be a thank-you note; it is the fact that they have been recognized in some way that holds meaning. Most staff are very intrinsically motivated to do the extra things they do; this is the nature of teaching. They will not stop doing something simply because they do not receive a reward. However, without recognition, they may begin to feel unappreciated and that may end their involvement. Creating a culture of appreciation can have a profound effect on the willingness of staff to "go the extra distance." This can be applied to students as well.

Finally, one of the results of this study has been the discovery that much of what principals do to create a successful culture comes out of their ability to understand and shape culture. Each of the principals in this study had some similar, and some very different, ideas regarding which factors are important when initiating the culture of a new school. However, it was their ability to recognize these factors and how they could influence them that determined how successful each was in creating the school culture they desired. As well, principals must recognize how all these elements of culture fit together, and that to create a cohesive culture, each aspect of the culture must reflect the same values. If contradictory messages are created by symbols or resource allocation, or if espoused values do not reflect underlying assumptions, then the culture of

the school will flounder. Thus principals must have a good understanding of culture and an appreciation of its influence over school effectiveness.

From the first interview with each principal, it became evident at the outset that each had clear ideas about the culture he wanted to create. However, each principal's knowledge of culture and how it develops was learned in different ways. The principal of School A relied heavily on his past experiences when making decisions regarding different aspects of the school culture. He recognized the importance of developing a certain type of culture (and of not developing other types), and relied on knowledge gained from experiences at his previous school and through talking with others to guide many of his decisions. He also tended to focus on some of the more managerial aspects, such as hiring an efficient office staff, rather than some of the more social aspects, such as celebration, thus reflecting his more managerial leadership style. The principal of School B relied both on experience and theory. He had clearly read some effective schools literature and put much of this newly gained knowledge to use in creating the culture at his school. His focus was more on the social aspects of creating culture, and even though he mentioned the importance of putting systems into place, he did not make this the focus of culture development at his school. This emphasis on the social reflected his more parental leadership style.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRINCIPAL TRAINING

The results of this study offer some implications for graduate programs that train future principals. First, future principals need a working understanding of organizational theory and how this theory is applicable to the school system in

which they work. Secondly, they need to investigate the different leadership styles and their potential effects and reflect on what aspects of each style they already possess and which they would like to adopt. Leadership should be a continually reflective process (Gronn; Sergiovanni, *The Principalship*). Thirdly, they need to understand the important role culture plays in determining school effectiveness and realize that school effectiveness is more than just student performance on standardized tests. As part of their study of culture, all the different aspects of school culture, such as artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions should be understood, as well as the role each of these areas plays in the development of culture. A knowledge of sacred and profane norms (Corbett, Firestone & Rossman) will also aid in their understanding of the culture of their school and what aspects of it they can influence.

Theoretical knowledge is extremely important as it will help mold the type of leader people will become and aid in their reflective process. Practical knowledge can be gained through experience on the job, but without the theoretical background to support decisions, the outcome of these decisions relies too heavily on instinct or luck. Some graduate programs place too much emphasis on learning how to be a good manager instead of how to be a good leader. As Sergiovanni stated "management is concerned with doing things right…Leadership is concerned with doing right things" (*The Principalship* 44). This is an important distinction and recognizes the moral responsibilities that accompany leadership. It is through the study of theory and the self-reflection that often accompanies it, that future principals can become leaders who shape the cultures of their schools.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The main implication for future research is the need for studies that examine the principal's role in developing culture in a new school. Longitudinal studies that look at culture development over a ten to fifteen year period are an interesting place to start. Studies of this length would allow one to examine changes in the school's culture that occur over an extended period of time. As well, culture is something that takes time to develop, and as one founding teacher mentioned, four years is not much time to develop cultural traditions or cultural pride. In a longitudinal study, one could chart the changes in culture that occur over an extended period of time as well as the changes in staff viewpoints. For example, it would also be interesting to interview the two new teachers at each school in three to four years, to see how their immersion into their respective school cultures will occur. The advantage of these types of longitudinal studies is that as problems develop, the causal relationships can be traced. This kind of knowledge would be very beneficial to principals as it may help them avoid some potential problem areas or at least offer possible resolutions.

A second implication for future research is the call for more indepth case studies examining the relationships between certain aspects of culture. This study examines several aspects of culture that could be examined in much more depth such as layout of classrooms, resource allocation, school logos, school mottos and slogans, and spoken versus acted values. Each of these areas offers several possibilities for indepth case study. For example, the creation of the school logo could be studied in detail, looking for causal relationships between

the logo and student pride in their school, or between the creation of the logo and the degree to which students relate to or associate with it. The same type of study could be done involving staff and parents. The importance of the logo reflecting some aspect of the community in determining student relationship to it would also make an interesting study. Some schools are now looking to corporate funding as fundraising alternative. The effect of the presence of corporate logos on school uniforms, accompanying the school logo, could also be examined.

A third implication for future research would be to create a more broad-based research project, with many more participants. One of the limitations of this study was that only three teachers from each school were interviewed. By interviewing a larger number of staff members, a more comprehensive picture of school culture would arise. As well, parents and students are also key players in the way in which culture develops in a school. Interviewing members of these participant groups would again provide a richer, more indepth view of a school's culture. This is an area of research I personally would like to pursue in the future.

A fourth implication for further research would be to examine some of the more negative aspects of school culture and how they develop. For example, resistance to new initiatives, or even to forming visions or missions would make an interesting study in a new school. Not all teachers coming to a new school approach the change positively. Many carry ideas and beliefs from their previous school that they are unwilling to mold or change to fit their new environment. The hostilities and problems that occur in the first year of operation, as staff members learn to work together (or don't as may occur in some schools) and adapt to their

new environments, would also make an interesting study. For a study of this nature though, it would be best if it occurred during the first year of operation, as often when things are going well, people forget the seriousness of the problems of the past.

Finally, the recent changes in provincial policy regarding school accountability contracts, and the effects these contracts will have on school culture would also make a fascinating study. Accountability contracts force schools to become goal oriented, and all goals must be quantitatively measurable. This focus on student and staff performance reduces schools to the efficiently running machine metaphor, which does not take culture into account. It will be interesting to see how principals balance these managerial demands with the leadership demands of creating a positive school culture.

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Appendix A

Ethics Approval

APPENDIX A[*]
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA V5A 1S6
Telephone: 604-291-3447
FAX: 604-268-6785

June 5, 2003

Ms. Heidi Nielsen
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University

Dear Ms. Nielsen:

**Re: The role of the principal in developing culture
at a new secondary school: a comparative case study**

The above-titled ethics application has been granted approval by the
Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board, at its meeting on May 26, 2003 in
accordance with Policy R 20.01, "Ethics Review of Research Involving
Human Subjects".

Sincerely,

Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director
Office of Research Ethics

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[*] For inclusion in thesis/dissertation/extended essays/research project report, as submitted to the university library in
fulfillment of final requirements for graduation. Note: correct page number required.

Appendix B

Participant Letter of Consent

Simon Fraser University
Informed Consent By Participants In a Research Project or Experiment

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the project or experiment, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project or experiment.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by the law. Knowledge of your identity is not required. You will not be required to write your name on any other identifying information on research materials. Material will be maintained in a secure location.

**Title: The role of the principal in developing culture at a new secondary
          school: a comparative case study**
Investigator: Heidi Nielsen
Investigator Department: Education

Having been asked to participate in a research project or experiment, I certify that I have read the procedures specified in the information documents, describing the project or experiment. I understand the procedures to be used in this experiment and the personal risks to me in taking part in the project or experiment, as stated below:

Risks and Benefits:
This study provides little risk to the participants as you will be asked questions about the principal's role in developing culture at your school. You will not be asked to evaluate your fellow staff members or the principal, so there will be no problems with professional ethics. Some staff members may feel uncomfortable answering certain questions about staff values and the principal's values. You will be told at the outset of the interview that you are not expected to answer any questions beyond your degree of comfort. As well, after interview notes are transcribed, these notes will be reviewed with the participant to ensure ideas have been recorded accurately. All participants will remain anonymous from each other and in the publishing of study results.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that I may register any complaint with the Director of the Office of Research Ethics or the researcher named above or with the Chair, Director or Dean of the Department, school or Faculty as shown below.

Department, School or Faculty: Education
Chair, Director or Dean: or Director of Research Ethics: H. Weinberg

888 University Way, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5A 1S6, Canada

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting:

Heidi Nielsen (address given) or Eugenie Samier, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

I have been informed that the research will be confidential.

I understand that my supervisor or employer may require me to obtain his or her permission prior to my participation in a study of this kind.

What The Subject is Required to Do:
Participants will participate in two interviews, both designed to elicit information about the development of culture at each school, the principal's role in this development, and the current culture of the school. The second interview will be a follow-up interview where findings will be shared and observations discussed. Specifically you will be asked to participate in an interview where you will be asked to offer your opinions and observations regarding different aspects of the school culture such as resource allocation; the logo and school colours; school mottos and slogans; values held by staff, students, administration and parents; professional development; and school layout. Later I will invite you to enter into another informal interview, where you will be asked to review and clarify my initial findings.

Subject Last Name: _____ Subject First Name: _____
Subject Contact Information: _____

_____

_____

Subject Signature: _____

Witness: _____

Date (use format MM/DD/YY): _____

Appendix C

Interview Guides

First Interview Questions: Administrators
First Interview Questions: Teachers
Second Interview Questions: Administrators
Second Interview Questions: Teachers

First Interview Questions: Administrators

1. When you were first told you had been awarded the principalship at the new school, what were your thoughts as to what you wanted to accomplish at this new school?

2. What do you see as the most important characteristics of a good school? Do you feel your school reflects these characteristics? (Which ones? How?)

3. What do you feel are the most important factors in creating an effective school culture?

4. When you created positions, did you have specific types of teachers in mind (Explain). When you hired staff, what criteria did you use in selecting applicants who would further your vision of the school culture?

5. Did you have any input as to the physical layout of the building? If so, what? (Why did you make these decisions?) Do you see any impediments/benefits to developing a good culture in the layout of the building? What cultural factors influenced your decisions as to the allocation of departments and preparation space?

6. When you received funding for resources at the school, what were your priorities and how did these aid in the development of culture? Why?

7. How did you go about creating the school logo and deciding upon school colours? What effect do you feel these things have on the culture of your school?

8. Does the school (or you) have any mottos or slogans that are reflective of the values of the staff and students? If so, how were these developed?

9. If you were going to give advice to a principal who was going to be responsible for opening a new school about developing the culture of their school, what would you tell them?

Questions that provide clarification may be asked.

First Interview Questions: Teachers

1. Why did you decide to leave your previous school and apply to this school?

2. Had you worked with the principal prior to coming to this school? Did this influence your decision? How?

3. When you first arrived at the school, what was the first thing that stood out in your mind about it?

4. Were you interviewed or placed? At the interview, was there any questions that stood out in your mind as unusual or as "clincher" questions (ones that will determine whether or not you get the job)?

5. How would you describe the layout of the school? What aspects of the layout of this school do you think contribute to a good culture for both the staff and the students?

6. Can you picture the school logo? Do you think the logo reflects the staff and students in any way?

7. Does the school have any mottos or slogans that reflect the values of staff and students? If so, how have they developed?

8. What do you feel the school's focus has been in the allocation of resources and how has this affected the school culture? (Explain).

9. If you were to describe the culture of this school how would you describe it? Why?

10. What do you see your role as being in contributing to the culture of the school?

11. What do you see the principal's role as being in creating and maintaining a culture in the school?

Questions that provide clarification may be asked.

Second Interview Questions: Administrators

1. After reading over the transcript from the first interview, do you have any concerns or comments?

2. What do you feel are the main values held by staff? By parents? By students?

3. What types of professional development did you have in the first three years which encouraged the development of the school's culture?

4. When a TOC comes to the school for the first time, what impression do you want him/her to get of your school? How do you ensure he/she leaves with this impression?

5. What do you see as the role of celebration or ceremony in the development of culture?

Questions that provide clarification may be asked.

Second Interview Questions: Teachers

1. After reading over the transcript from the first interview, do you have any concerns or comments?

2. What do you feel are the main values held by staff? By parents? By students?

3. What do you feel the principal values most highly? Can you elaborate?

4. What types of professional development did you have in the first three years which encouraged the development of the school's culture?

5. If you were going to offer a piece of advice to a new staff member, what would it be?

6. If you were to describe your school to a colleague from another school who is thinking about applying for a position at your school, what would you say?

Questions that provide clarification may be asked.

Appendix D

E-mail Communication

E-mail Following First Round of Interviews
E-mail Following Second Round of Interviews

E-mail Following First Round of Interviews

Dear Participant:

First of all, I would like to thank you for your participation in the first interview. I have obtained a lot of interesting and valid information for my study. Attached to this note, is a copy of the interview transcript for our first interview. Please ignore the ah's and umm's as my thesis advisor told me I had to type the transcripts as exactly as possible (and we all use fillers). This is a draft form of the transcript only. The official copy will have all references to teachers and the school made more anonymous (ie. Fellow teacher, another district school, etc.). Please peruse this transcript at your leisure and feel free to mark it up in any way with questions you may have or things you'd like to add. You are not expected to proof-read, but if you see any glaring errors please don't hesitate in taking a red pen to them.

I will be arranging second interviews beginning next week. These should be much shorter in length than the first as I only have 5 more questions to ask (dealing with professional development, staff, student and administration values, etc.). As well, we can go over any questions or concerns that have arisen from the first interview and transcript. After that, I'll provide you with a transcript of the second interview for you to okay, before anything officially becomes part of my study. At this point, your role has finished.

Again, I greatly appreciate your time and effort.

Sincerely,

Heidi Nielsen

E-mail Following Second Round of Interviews

Dear Participant:

Well, finally, here's the copy of the second interview transcript. Once again, all references to yourself, other teachers, or the school will be taken out before it becomes part of my thesis. Please read through it and let me know if there are any changes you would like to make. If you could let me know before we leave for the summer holidays that would be great. My thesis should be completed by August 22nd and I am hoping to defend on September 16th. If you would like to see the finished product or drafts for that matter, just let me know. (I can always use another proof-reader). I can be reached over the summer at ….(address and e-mail address provided).

Once again, thank you for taking the time to answer all my questions.

Heidi Nielsen